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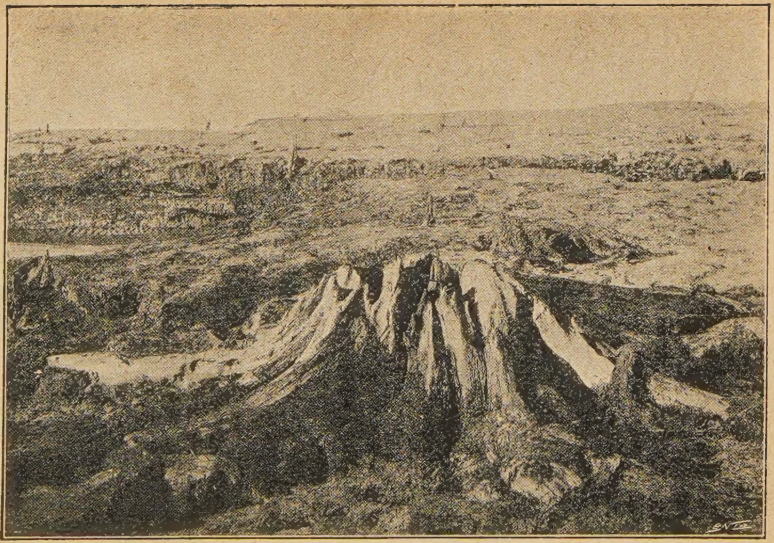
THE STORY OF OUR SUBMERGED COASTS



PHOTOGRAPH OF A SUBMERGED FOREST OFF THE CHESHIRE COAST, AS IT APPEARS

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LOST ENGLAND

THE STORY OF OUR SUBMERGED COASTS

BY

BECKLES WILLSON

"Invenies sub aquis: et adhuc ostendere nautae
Inclinata solent cum moenibus oppida mersis."
OVID, *Met.* lib. xv. 294.

WITH TWENTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

THE present small volume has been compiled in the belief that the historic diminution of the area of their country is a matter of interest and importance to Englishmen, who exhibit so jealous a concern for every foot of soil possessed by their race in any quarter of the globe.

The dates and circumstances of the submersion of many hundreds of square miles of territory, and no fewer than thirty-four towns and villages, within the modern period, have not always, as the reader may believe, been ascertained without difficulty. Concerning the present rate of erosion there are, I am sorry to say, no Parliamentary statistics, although it is one which might well offer scope for valuable official investigation.

B. W.

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LOST ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

"A land of matchless grace was Lyonesse,
Glorious with rolling hills, rejoicing streams,
Hoar monuments upreared when Time was young,
Wide plains of forest, slopes of golden corn,
And stately castles crowning granite peaks."
The Lady of Lyonesse.

When we proclaim to all the universe that "Britannia rules the waves" we are merely giving poetical expression to a fact—Britain's naval supremacy. Taking the national phrase literally, old Ocean is so far from acknowledging his subjugation, that he exacts from this island an appalling annual tribute. We pay in lives and we pay also in land. Many amongst us who know all about the human "price of Admiralty," know little or nothing about that other sacrifice which has been going on since the dawn of our Motherland's history—that of the sea-coasts, of the many towns, beauteous villages and smiling pastures which have been swept away for ever into the insatiable salt flood.

At first it is difficult for the inquirer to know

where to turn for information. There are the statistics of total acreage published by the Board of Agriculture; but these are hardly helpful. If we could rely implicitly upon these figures, our interest would give place to alarm, if not to panic, so great is the disparity from decade to decade. We may glance at the series of maps of the Ordnance Survey; but the "Story of Lost England" must needs be slowly compiled from local records, topographical histories, antiquarian rather than geological researches and cadastral statistics, and from old maps and plans.

Every year we lose a tract of land the size of Gibraltar. On the East Coast alone we lose territory more than equal in size to the Island of Heligoland. In the last hundred years a fragment of our kingdom as large as the county of London lies buried beneath the sea!

All along the green verge of the realm (with the exceptions to be noted hereinafter) this marine erosion goes on, in some districts—as, for example, in Norfolk—working a terrible havoc, so that the very trees and vegetation seem to turn and flee from the doom which awaits them. For hundreds of miles on the English coasts are buried once prosperous towns and villages and mighty forests, where once roamed the red deer, inclosed in lordly parks, and assuaging their thirst in lakes long since vanished. The line of anchorage for ships off Selsey in Sussex is still, by mariners ignorant of the term's origin, called "the Park." For in Henry VIII.'s reign it was full of noble stags and does, and for poaching in these Royal preserves a bishop

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once fiercely excommunicated certain unhappy deer-stealers.

Then, when we fall back on old chronicles and old traditions, we are confronted with even more impressive evidence of loss by action of the sea.

In Yorkshire alone there are no fewer than twelve buried towns and villages. In Suffolk there are at least four. At many places on the coast to-day the remains of submerged forests are visible at low water. Such a forest may be seen plainly off the coast in the Wirral district of Cheshire. To even the least observant visitor there exist innumerable relics on the coasts and shore-line of many districts which tell of once prosperous territory wrested from Britannia by Father Neptune. Yet, at the outset, we must not forget that we have brought about the reclamation of many thousand acres in Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, and elsewhere; but even with this offset in our favour, the balance is hundreds of square miles against us; and the expansion of England (using England in the narrow insular sense), if such erosion continue, must ever be political and moral rather than geological and actual.

Of the romance of that lost tract of England which lies between Land's End and the Scilly Isles one must fain be silent. All up and down our literature are scattered allusions to and descriptions of Lyonesse; were even the briefest of these included here, the present little work would itself, at the very outset, suffer from an inundation of fable, and

become submerged in a torrent of picturesque inaccuracy. And in pages which aim to search out and determine the exact geological and topographical truth, this is not desirable.

Nevertheless, the fondness of the poets and fabalists for Lyonesse is not to be wondered at.*

To sit at Land's End on a summer's day, watching a west-bound ship under full steam or crowded canvas, and not find some magic in the thought that beneath her swiftly gliding keel there stretch once-verdant hills and dales, ruined towers and castles, towns and villages, is to be wanting in imagination indeed. It is a legend, too, hereabouts—an ubiquitous legend, I fear, local to all the neighbourhoods of submerged England—that—

> "In the crystal depths the curious eye,
> On days of calm unruffled, could discern
> . . . her streets and towers,
> Low-buried 'neath the waves."

Land's End, says Camden, once undoubtedly stretched far to the westward. Mariners have no doubt of this, from the rubbish they constantly draw up. In the utmost rocks of this promontory, when they are bare at low water, appear veins of white lead and brass. And the inhabitants say there was formerly set a watch-tower with lights for the direction of mariners.

"About the middle way," remarks Gibson, in his edition of Camden, "between Land's End and

* The gifted Cornish novelist, Mr. Arthur Quiller-Couch, has added his contribution to the romance of Lyonesse in *Scribner's Magazine* for August, 1901.

Scilly there are rocks called in Cornish Lethas,* by the English Seven Stones; and the Cornish call the place within the stones Tregas (a dwelling); where, according to reports, windows and such other stuff have been taken up with hooks. It is said also that from the Land's End to Scilly is an equal depth of water, that St. Michael's Mount is called in Cornish Carey Cowse in Clowse, *i.e.* 'the hoary rock in the wood,' . . . that large trees with roots and body have been of late years driven in by the sea between St. Michael's Mount and Pensanze. To these add the tradition that at the time of the inundation Trevilian swam from thence, and in memory thereof bears *gules* a horse argent issuing out of the sea."

Sir Richard Carew, the friend and contemporary of Camden and Raleigh, a learned scholar, knight and gentleman, who was chosen when only fourteen years of age to dispute with the great Sidney himself "in presence of certain of the nobilitie," was one of the earliest modern historians to affirm the truth of the statements of the early chroniclers and of tradition concerning Lyonesse. He even declared "that such a Lionesse there was there are proofs *yet remaining*." I will quote the passage which follows in full—

"The space between the Land's End and the Isles of Scilly, being about thirty miles, to this day retaineth that name [of Lionesse], in Cornish

* As a confirmation of the statement of the old chroniclers that Land's End formerly extended many miles further west, we have the chart of Ptolemy, which gives the promontory known as Bolerium as being situate long. 11° 30′, lat. 52° 30″.

Lethowsow,* and carrieth continually an equal depth of forty to sixty feet, a thing not usual in the sea's proper dominion, save that about the midway there lieth a rock which at low water discovereth his head. They term it the gulf, suiting thereby the other name of Scilla. Fishermen also casting their nets thereabouts have drawn up the pieces of doors and windows. Moreover, the ancient name of St. Michael's Mount was Cara Clowse (the hore rock in the woode), which now is at every flood encompassed by the sea, and yet, at some low ebbs, roots of mighty trees are seen round about it."

Another old writer says that—

"On the head between Mount St. Michael and Penzance, when the sands have been dispersed and drawn into the sea, I have myself seen several large trees in their natural position, as well as I can recollect, worn smooth just above their roots, upon which, at full tide, there must be twelve feet of water." Moreover, "a league from the shore of Land's End there is to be seen, in a clear day in the bottom of the sea, a wood of timber lying on its side uncorrupted, as if formerly grown there when it was dry ground, thrown down by the violence of the waves."

It will be observed in the above passages and in those of other contemporary writers, that St. Michael's Mount is spoken of in direct connection with the submerged territory of Lyonesse. The popular and antiquarian idea undoubtedly

* The resemblance between this name and Leasowe, on the coast of Cheshire—where, as we shall see, a large tract of land has been submerged—has been thought curious. But I think we need go no farther for a satisfactory derivation than the A.S. : *leasowe*, i.e. pasture.

STRICKLAND'S CHART OF THE LYONESSE DISTRICT.

was that it formed a triangular peninsula whose apex was at what are now the Scilly Isles, and its base the line of coast extending between the two former places—or rather, between the Land's End and the Lizard, comprising the whole of the bay in which the mount is situated.

By the title of Lyonesse, Leonois, or Lions was intended by the early chroniclers the dim and distant region beyond and below that part of Devonshire which, down to so late as A.D. 410, in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle continued to be known as Cornwall. Mr. Chattaway, in his "Historical Sketch of the Danmonii," tells us that—

"That part of Britain, called by the Greeks and Romans Danmonia, comprised the modern counties of Devonshire and Cornwall, and was considered the fourth great division of the island, until the land between the Land's End and the Scilly Islands was destroyed by the encroachment of the ocean."

Other historians are as certain that the present Duchy was anciently called Corinæa, from Corinæus, the kinsman and companion of Brutus, the Trojan.

"Cornwall by grant to Corinæus came :
The country from the Prince received its name."*

* It is otherwise recorded that after the defeat (A.D. 932) of Howel, the last Danmonian king, by Athelstan, and his being compelled to surrender to the Saxon all his territories east of the river Tamer, which then became the boundary between the two nations, the subjects of Howel were no longer called Britons, but Cornwallians or Cornishmen, from *corn*, a horn or promontory.

As this part of Britain was, about a thousand years before Christ, well peopled, its pastures stocked with herds, and the land in a flourishing condition, we may assume that the Phœnicians who visited Lyonesse at that time were favourably impressed. At what part they landed is not revealed, but it and the entire domain surrounding it is probably now submerged. It has been conjectured, however, that it may have been one of the present Scilly Isles, which were then higher ground than the remainder of the peninsula, and boasted good harbours. That the Phœnicians made their first acquaintance with the country as the result of an accident is not improbable, one of their ships having been driven on the coast by a tempest. Allured by the prospect of an advantageous commerce, the Danmonii began to work their tin mines, and Britain soon became to the Phœnicians what Peru in later years became to the Spaniards. Melcarthus, who was the contemporary of Eli, high priest of Israel, is recorded to have commanded the first ship that brought tin from Britain. To the people of Corinæa, or Lyonesse, it was their tin which purchased them splendid raiment, purple and fine linen, as well as gold and silver trinkets, and many other luxuries from the East. It is natural that from this commerce there should spring those ideas and practices of refinement ascribed by tradition to this portion of the island at a period when the rest was sunk in comparative barbarism.

"Those Britons," says Diodorus Siculus,* "who dwell near the promontory of Bolerium, live in a very hospitable, polite manner, which is owing to their great intercourse with foreign merchants. They prepare, with much dexterity, the tin which the country produceth. . . . When it is refined they cast into ingots, in the shape of cubes or dies, and then carry it into an adjacent island, which is called Ictis ; for when it is low water the space between the island and the continent of Britain becomes dry land, and they carry great quantities of tin into it in their carts. Here the merchants buy it and transport it to the coast of Gaul, from whence they convey it overland on horses, in about thirty days, to the mouth of the Rhone."

As the tin trade grew there, an emporium was demanded and established, and the tin brought to the aforementioned isle, Ictis, whence it was shipped at leisure.

At a later period (350 B.C.) the Greeks, seized with a desire to find the islands from whence the Phœnicians procured their tin, reached the shores of Lyonesse and the adjacent parts, to which they gave the name of Cassiterides (from the British word "cassitir," or "wood-land"). One eminent authority thinks there is no doubt they afterwards called the metal from the place whence it was exported, as Europeans call *nankeen* from the port of Nankin, and that from thence the Greeks derived κασσίτερος, their word for tin.

Nor can it be doubted that the Phœnicians formerly had settlements or colonies of merchants on the shores of Lyonesse, inasmuch as

* Hawkins' translation, p. 50.

the names of many places in what is left of the Cornish peninsula are of Phœnician origin.*

It is certain that our ancient language was mixed with theirs. I have even seen it surmised that Hartland Point was named by them from their titular god, Hercules, and Start Point derives its name from the goddess Astarte. The Greeks are said by Polewhele to have had a factory at the Rame-head; but the ravages of the sea have long since removed every trace of such settlements, as well as the land surrounding them.

In the opening paragraph of his "Survey of Devon" Risdon says—

"That region which geographers account the first of all Britain, and shooteth out furthest into the west, was once reputed the fourth part of this island, and supposed to be a kingdom *before the sea swallowed up the land between St. Burian and the islands of Scilly*, included under the name of Danmonia, is of later times divided into two parts, known by the names of Devonshire and Cornwall."

Before dealing with the various authorities upon, as well as the theories and legends of the catastrophe which overwhelmed, Lyonesse, I think it best first to direct the reader's attention to certain references to the Casseritides in ancient authors, and to the modern misconception (as it will shortly appear) which connects them with the Scilly Isles of to-day. I have

* *Pen* and *Tre* are very common in the names of places; the former being derived from the Phœnician word 'pennah' (a hill), and the latter from 'tira' (a town or castle).

already observed that the Casseritides is derived from Cassites (wood-land), and that it embraced Lyonesse, Cornwall, Ictis, Devon, and certain islands off the coast now submerged, portions of which may be identified with the modern Scilly Isles. In order to make this last point clearer, let us understand that according to Strabo the number of the Scilly Isles did not exceed ten, whereas at present there are upwards of one hundred and forty. Of these only the following are inhabited, namely : St. Mary's, St. Agnes, St. Martin's, and Trescau ; nor has it escaped antiquarians as curious that the name of the entire series should have been derived from one of the smallest islets (Scilly) whose area does not exceed one acre.

Diodorus says—

"Far beyond Lusitania [Portugal] very much tin is dug out of the islands of the ocean nearest to Iberia, which, from the tin, are named Casseritides."

Strabo declares, too, on the authority of Posidonius, that—

"tin is not found upon the surface, as is commonly said, but is dug up ; and it is produced both in places among the barbarians who dwell beyond the Lusitanians and in the islands Casseritides ; and from the Britannic islands it is carried to Marseilles."

Borlase, the archæologist, proves clearly that "the slow advances and depredations of the sea will by no means suffice" to account for the great changes in the Scilly Isles since Roman

times. He says that the present inhabitants are all new-comers, and that he nowhere found any remains of the Phœnician, Roman, or Grecian art. All the antiquities are of the rudest Druid times. All the islands (most of which are now without cattle or inhabitants) demonstrate that they have formerly been inhabited and under cultivation by the remains of hedges, walls, foundations of many contiguous houses, and a great number of sepulchral barrows. That they were peopled with Britons is past all doubt, not merely from their vicinity to England, but from their Druid monuments. There are, or were—

"several rude stone pillars, circles of stones erect, Kist-væns without number, rock-basins, tolmêns, all monuments common in Cornwall and Wales, and equal evidences of the antiquity, religion, and origin of the old inhabitants. They have also British names for their little islands, tenements, and creeks."

How, then, did the ancient inhabitants eventually disappear? Two causes, remarks the authority last quoted, occurred to his mind while in Scilly :—

"The manifest encroachments of the sea and as manifest a subsidence of the land. . . . The continual advances which the sea makes on the low lands are obvious, and within the last thirty years have been very considerable. Again, the flats which stretch from one island to another are *plain eviaences of a former union subsisting between many now distinct islands.*"

It is said further by Borlase that—

"the flats between Trescau, Brêhar and Sampson are quite dry at a spring tide; and men easily pass dryshod from one island to another over sandbanks, where, on the shifting of the sands, walls and ruins are frequently discovered, on which at full sea there are ten or twelve feet of water."

But, after all, it would be difficult to diminish the significance of the fact already alluded to, that the isle of Scilly, from which the group takes its name, is no more at present than a high rock about a furlong across, whose cliffs are inaccessible to all but the birds of the air, and quite barren. Walls and ruins have been frequently met with on the shore, whose foundations must have been at least six feet above high-water mark, and are now ten feet under, thus making a difference in sea-level of sixteen feet.

There were no mines to be seen in any of these islands in 1760, but only one lode in Trescau, and the workings there very inconsiderable and by no means ancient.

Is it not, therefore, a matter of wonder where the Phœnicians, Greeks, and Romans could have found such quantities of that useful metal? Whatever resources they possessed in Cornwall proper, great part of their tin must undoubtedly have come from this vicinity, from islands hereabouts, but where, if it be not from Lyonesse, is uncertain, because nothing appears above ground which can satisfy such an inquiry. The question

is, What has become of these mines? The conclusion is irresistible that the land in which these mines were is now sunk and buried under the sea.

In order to continue our investigations into the changes which during the historical period have taken place west of Land's End, to lay before the reader all the facts which modern research has made available, I will quote from Dr. Paris, the author of a work on this district, published in 1824, in which he says—

"The Scilly Isles are said to be mentioned by Diodorus Siculus, Strabo and Solinus. They must, however, have undergone some material revolution since the age of these writers, for we fail in every attempt to reconcile their present state with the description which they have transmitted to us, and, what is very unaccountable, not a vestige of any ancient mine can be discovered in these islands, except in one part of Trescau, and these remains are so limited that they rather give an idea of an attempt at discovery than of extensive and permanent mining."

Indeed, as has been shown, there is no doubt about the Scilly Isles having been known to the ancients. They are called by Antoninus, Sigdeles; by Sulpitius Severus, Sillinæ; by Solinus, Silures; by Dionysius Alexandrinus, Hesperides; by Festus Avienus (who lived in the latter part of the fourth century), Ostrymnides; and by several Greek writers, Cassiterides. But they were only ten in number, and apparently of considerable size. Is it possible to resist the conviction that the whole, or nearly the whole,

of the ancient Casseritides either bordered upon or formed an integral part of the ancient Lyonesse?

When did the inundation take place? The greater part of the tract of land was swept away, doubtless, in the sixth century. It was probably coeval with the submersion of the Lowland Hundred in Cardigan Bay, which is described by the Welsh chroniclers. Other portions vanished at different times in the eleventh century.* I have consulted "Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel," edited and commented upon by the Rev. John Earle, late Professor of Anglo-Saxon, Oxford, and extracted therefrom the two following passages from the years respectively named:—

"1014. And on this year, on St. Michael's-Mass-Even, came the great sea-flood through widely this land, and ran so far up as never before not did, and submerged many towns, and mankind innumerable number" (p. 151).

"1099. This day also, on St. Martin-Mass-Day, sprang up the exceeding sea-flood, and so much to harm did, and was that same a new moon" (p. 235).†

Concerning the absolute reliance to be placed on the above, Professor Earle declares that—

* Vice-Admiral Thevenard places the submersion of the western extremity of England near the Scilly Isles at the commencement of the ninth century. I do not know by what authority or process of reasoning.

† Florence of Worcester also says: "On the third day of the nones of November, 1099, the sea came out upon the shore, and buried towns and men very many, and oxen and sheep innumerable."

"the Saxon Chronicles which we possess are the guarantees of the truth and fidelity of the subsequent historians; and the changeful mother tongue gives that touch of confidence which the fixed and rigid Latin, much the same everywhere, could never have imparted."

A vexed controversy has raged as to the precise period at which the insulation of St. Michael's Mount, Cornwall, occurred, in which many learned persons, including the late Professor Max Müller, took part. The conclusions reached by Mr. Peacock, who, thirty odd years ago, devoted considerable attention to the matter, are in substance as follows:—

As every Cornish visitor is aware, St. Michael's Mount is an island situated in Mount's Bay, Penzance. Domesday Book, compiled in 1086, in the portion relating to Cornvalge (Cornwall) contains the following entry:—

"The Land of St. Michael. Keiwal holds the church of St. Michael. Brismar was holding it in the reign of King Edward. There are two hides which never paid the Danish tax. The land is eight carucates. There is 1 carucate with 1 villan, and 2 bordarii and 10 acres of pasture. Value 20 shillings."

And accordingly, at p. 11 of Domesday Book, there are inscribed, in the descriptive list of the many estates of Earl Moriton, corresponding particulars of the hide which he had abstracted.

In the foregoing excerpt it will be seen that Domesday Book supplies no reason for believing that at the date at which it was compiled St.

Michael's Mount was an island. Neither does Magna Britannia, wherein the Mount is called Mychel-stop, or Michael's place.

It is also worthy of remark that in every case while annotating those holding possessions in Cornwall, there is an entire absence in Domesday Book of any mention of island or islands off the coasts of Cornwall. On the other hand, it is the rule when any place is an island, to describe it as such.*

But a better reason why the Mount could not have been an island in 1086 is that it then contained at least eight times as much land as it does at present. According to Sir Henry Ellis there are four virgates in each hide, and thirty acres to make a virgate. The elementary acre was then, as now, forty perches by four perches; and accordingly the eight carucates would amount to 480 acres. But if we admit that a hide contained no certain and stationary number of acres, but altered according to place and reign, we have the area of the Mount variously rendered as from 940 to 1440 acres. It could not have been under the former figure; yet the present area is only 30 acres, so that there are at least 910 acres missing.

It is observed by Sir Henry de la Beche† that—

* For example, in Vol. I. folio 75, under "Dorsete," we find "the land of the King." The King holds the island which is called Porland (*i.e.* Portland). And again, Vol. I. folio 396, "Hanteschire. These lands below written lie in the isle of Wit."

† "Report on Cornwall," p. 417, *et seq.*

"submarine forests are so common that it is difficult not to find traces of them in the district at the mouths of all the numerous valleys which open upon the sea and are in any manner silted up."

Sir Henry then proceeds to give details concerning various submarine forests on the coasts of Devon and Cornwall. Such a forest exists, or until lately existed, in Mount's Bay, upon which fact we have abundant corroboration. It is clear, therefore, that the forest land, in which St. Michael's Mount formerly appeared as a promontory, now lies submerged by the sea. If we need further testimony to this, we need only go back to the time of Domesday Book for the origin of the Cornish name of St. Michael's Mount—Carreg Coedh yn Clos, *i.e.* Hoary Rock in the Wood.*

William of Worcester expressly asserts that St. Michael's Mount was formerly five or six miles from the sea, and enclosed with a very thick wood, called in British, Carreg lug en Kuz—Le Hore Rock in the Wodd.

Nevertheless, Professor Max Müller asks—

"Have geologists left it doubtful whether the insulation of the Mount was due to the washing of the seashore, or to a general subsidence of the country? May not the Mount have always been that kind of half island, which it certainly was two thousand years ago?"

* Variously rendered as Careg Cowse, Cara Clowse in Kowse, Karreg Luz en Kuz, etc. Norden in 1584, and Camden in 1586, concurred in giving it as Careg Cowse, which the first rendered the Grey Rock, and the second Rupis Cana.

He thinks the term "Cara Clowse in Cowse" referred originally to some other place.

However this may be, in viewing the whole scenery of the western coast of Cornwall—

"it is impossible," says De Luc, "not to be struck with the idea that the bed of the sea is the effect of a vast subsidence, in which the strata were broken off in the edge of what, by the retreat of the sea towards the sunken part, became a continent ; the many small islands or rocks of granite appear to be memorials of the land's abridgement, being evidently parts of the sunken strata remaining more elevated than the rest."

That this is precisely what has happened must now be obvious to all.

The language spoken by the inhabitants of Lyonesse was probably that which vanished two or three centuries ago. William Camden, who was born in 1550 and died in 1623, attests that the Cornish tongue had not become quite extinct in his time. He says, speaking of the Danmonii (whom we have previously noticed as the inhabitants of Lyonesse)—

"The old Cornish tongue is almost quite driven out of the country, being spoken only by the vulgar in two or three parishes at the Land's End, and they, too, understand the English. In other parts little or nothing is known of it. 'Tis a good while since that only two men could write it ; one of them, no scholar nor grammarian, was blind with age."

In the reign of Charles I. some aged people near Penryn were quite ignorant of the English

language. In the early part of the eighteenth century Cornish was still spoken by the fishermen and market women near the extreme southern point of the country, but practically the ancient tongue of Lyonesse disappeared not long after the great inundation, which swept away the largest and most fertile tract of country where it had been spoken since the time of the intercourse with the Phœnicians. So that the language has perished with the land.

The situation of that island known to the ancients under the name of Ictis, whence the Cornish Britons brought their tin at low water to be shipped to the Continent, is, in spite of all the light that modern science has been able to shed upon it, still considered a matter of doubt.

It has been variously thought to be St. Michael's Mount (a theory which, if the Mount was not then an island, is untenable); Black Rock, in Falmouth harbour; St. Nicholas or Drake's Island, in Plymouth Sound; and the Isle of Wight. It is also believed, and with far greater probability, to have been entirely destroyed by the encroachments of the sea.

Those who hold, or formerly held, Ictis to be Black Rock, did so because the river Fal is in the centre of the modern mining district. Mr. Chattaway does not think there exists any proof that the Phœnicians ever traded so far east as the Tamer, although a block of tin, answering to the ancient description, has been found in Falmouth Bay. He admits that a Phœnician coin was found some years ago in Torbay. But

this really proves nothing; and there are few who will now seriously contend that Ictis was near Falmouth. Yet, of course, it is possible that the encroachment of the sea might have reduced Ictis to the dimensions of Black Rock.

As regards Drake's Island, if the Britons worked the mines on the banks of that river, as was chronicled at the time, it is hardly probable that they would take the trouble to transport the produce in carts round its different creeks and branches to this spot, when it could be brought so easily in boats. A better claim than this could be advanced by the Mew Stone at the entrance of the Sound, as, according to tradition, it anciently joined the mainland. Moreover, the communication between it and the mines of Dartmoor was uninterrupted by rivers, inasmuch as all the streams are fordable.

As for the Isle of Wight, its identity with the ancient Ictis has been many times declared.

"As the Greeks," remarks Strutt, "increased their trade, they shortened their sea-voyages; and the tin which was got upon the Continent of Britain, after being refined and melted down into small ingots, was by the native Britons conveyed in carts and waggons, at low water, over into the Isle of Wight, and there sold to the Greek merchants, who exported it from thence to the Continent of Gaul."

The principal objection to its being Ictis is its great distance from even the most easterly parts of the territory inhabited by the Danmonii. It is exceedingly improbable that they would

carry their valuable metal so far through the dominions of a hostile nation.

"The only reasonable calculation," observes the historian of the Danmonii, already quoted, "to be drawn is, that Ictis was somewhere near the Land's End (because the oldest mines are in that neighbourhood), but destroyed by some violent commotion of nature, as the Atlantis of Pliny was."

On the whole, it must be confessed that while, tradition apart, we possess no direct knowledge concerning Lyonesse or its people, that such a tract of land existed is as far removed from fable as the earthquake of Lisbon, in which catastrophe, notwithstanding, Dr. Johnson persisted in disbelieving. I have purposely placed this loss first in my category because I am convinced that the proofs of the great changes which have overtaken the remaining coasts in recent centuries, and which have wholly altered the shape and multitude of the Scilly islands, will furnish my readers with sufficient reason to share my own convictions in the matter. Although, as Sir Charles Lyell observes, there is no authentic evidence for the loss of so large a tract, yet—

"If we turn to the Bristol Channel, we find that both on the north and south sides of it there are numerous remains of submerged forests; to one of these at Porlock Bay, on the coast of Somersetshire, Mr. Godwin-Austen has lately called particular attention, and has shown that it extends far from the land. There is good reason to believe that there was once a woodland tract uniting

Somersetshire and Wales, through the middle of which the ancient Severn flowed."

Miss Agnes Strickland says that a maiden lady of the immediate neighbourhood, who imagined that the secret spell for the purpose of recalling a glimpse of the lost land of Lyonesse had been revealed to her in a dream, once tried it. She "lifted up her voice often at midnight, from where the last edge of the Land's End promontory overhangs the seething water." But nothing came of the incantation; none of its inhabitants came at her bidding, trooping forth (to use the words of King Arthur)—

"Out of that countrie wherein I was bred
The which the fertile Lionesse is hight." *

CHAPTER II

"Up rose old Ocean from his bed
And landward drove his billowy car;
And headlands, spires, and villas fled
Before the elemental war."

SAILING northward from the lost land of Lyonesse, a pilgrim to our era from the days of King Arthur would have far deeper reason than ourselves, as his eye swept wistfully the coasts in search of familiar towns, villages, castles,

* Spenser's "Faerie Queene," bk. vi. canto ii.

churches and forests, to complain of the fearful and wholesale inroads which had been made by the sea.

When viewed on the map, Bristol Channel appears as if it had been formed by the continual beating of the violent tides that have flowed here for so many centuries. The sea seems to be wedging itself further and further inland, destroying the shore-line in some places, and carrying off the *débris* in order to reform new shores or deposits in other localities.

Eastward from Swansea Bay the cliffs are, as far as Penarth, near Cardiff, chiefly formed of liasic rocks, the height of which, in many points, is as much as eighty or one hundred feet, and nearly always very steep. The sea is now, and has been from time immemorial, undermining these liasic cliffs, and encroaching upon the land. Sometimes a single storm will wrench away many yards of coast. After a portion of such rocks have fallen into the sea they are washed and rolled to certain points along the shore, where they are gathered together and burnt into lime for agricultural and building purposes, many thousands of tons of water-lime being shipped annually from this district.

According to Professor Ramsay, the haven of Milford, one of the finest in the kingdom, is an old valley submerged, and afterwards its lines altered by the sea. The same, he says, is true of the Bristol Channel. But it is not until we reach the shores of Cardigan Bay that the effect of the lashings and beatings of Father

Ocean really arrests the attention, and awakens the deep interest of the student of Lost England. For at no distant time back the Welsh coastline extended from Carnarvon promontory to St. David's Head, in Pembrokeshire; and that tract of water which we now call Cardigan Bay, ripples and eddies over a mighty forest, where our forefathers were wont to dwell, and spend their days chasing the red deer. This submarine district to-day extends along the coast of Merionethshire and Cardiganshire, being divided into two parts by the estuary of the river Dovey, which separates those counties. It is bounded on the land side by a sandy beach and a wall of shingle. Beyond that wall is a tract of bog and marsh formed by streams of water, which are partially discharged by oozing through the sand and the shingle wall. It is held by the best authorities that, as the position of the wall is liable to change, it may have enclosed the part which is now submarine, and that it is not necessary to suppose a subsidence effected by subterranean agency. The remains of the forest are covered by a bed of peat, and are distinguished by an abundance of *Pholas candida* and *Teredo navalis*. Among the trees of which they consisted is the *Pinus sylvestris*, or Scotch fir, and it is shown that this tree abounded anciently in several northern counties of England.* The natural order of *Coniferæ* may thus be traced from the period of the independent coal formation to the middle of the

* "Proceedings of the Geological Society," vol. i. p. 407.

seventeenth century, although the Scotch fir is now excluded from the list of native flora. The boundary or extent of this submerged forest we can, of course, only approximate; but it is certain that all writers, ancient and modern, describe this bay as having been at an early period habitable, and inhabited by man and beast.

Cantref y Gwaelod, or the Lowland Hundred, was the name by which this lost land was

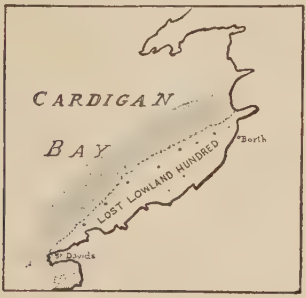


CHART OF CANTREF Y GWAELOD, SUBMERGED IN THE SIXTH CENTURY.

known; and if we may trust to the Welsh records, the inundation of the sea which devastated it occurred in the fifth century. Meyrick gives the date of the inundation as A.D. 520. Other authorities, as Carlisle, describe the catastrophe as having happened towards the close of the sixth century. The boundary of the Lowland Hundred was, we are told, Sarn Badrig or St. Patrick's Causeway,

which extends seaward in serpentine fashion, some twenty-two miles from the coast of Merionethshire, halfway between Harlech and Barmouth.

The coast included between this causeway and Cardigan formed the boundary on the north-eastern and southern sides; and an unascertained line from Cardigan to the extremity of Sarn Badrig constituted the western limit. On the whole, this Lowland Hundred was an extensive fertile country, boasting numerous towns, villages and hamlets. Its principal city appears to have been Caer Wyddnod, or Gwyddno's City. That Sarn Badrig, whose remains are still visible in the bay, was formerly one of the boundaries of Cantref y Gwaelod, is generally accepted, for at low water the whole of the vast ridge becomes dry, and, although deep on the north, shelves on the other side.

Four causeways, or roads, are still to be seen at low tide in the district. They are Sarn y Bwch, or the Goat's Causeway, which extends about a mile and a half into the sea just by Aberdysyni, in Merionethshire; Sarn Cyngelyn, or Cymbeline's Causeway, to which great British worthy there is dedicated a church in Cardiganshire. This latter ancient roadway extends some seven miles into the sea, from a place called Gwallawg, or Gwallog, in the last-named county, a term which, signifying "defective," seems to imply the inundation of this territory, and the destruction of the highway. At the termination of this road is Caer Wyddno,

a tract of very rocky ground, supposed to have been the royal residence. The next is Sarn Ddewi, or St. David's Causeway, and is exactly in the same line with the church of Llan, Ddewi Aberarth, otherwise St. David's, at the mouth of the River Arth. And finally, there is Sarn Cadwgan, or Cadogan's Road, which is about half a mile or more from Sarn Ddewi, and reaching rather more than a mile and a quarter into the sea. In addition to these roads, elevated as the ancient British highways always were, there is a great deal of ground that becomes dry at low water.

Some three miles west of Aberaeron, in this county, and about half a mile from the shore, is a piece of ground called Eglwys-y-rhiw, or the Church on the Hill-side. At the end of Sarn Badrig, just mentioned, are sixteen large stones, one of them being four yards in diameter. Moreover, there are also roots of trees in their natural position to be seen in great profusion throughout the whole submerged district; and as the ocean continues to gain on the coast of Merionethshire, in that beautiful valley called Dyffryn Ardudwy, it is in the highest degree likely that all the low ground there will, in process of time, undergo a similar fate, if not from the waves themselves, then from the constant westerly winds which blow the sands far inland, and so destroy vegetation.

Some years ago a stone was found in the sands about one hundred yards below high-water mark, on the coast of Merionethshire (which was part of the drowned country), bearing upon

its surface an inscription in Roman letters.* An old saying it is, even at the present day, amongst the peasants of Merionethshire and Cardiganshire, when any great misfortune occurs—

"Ochenaid Gwyddno Garanhir
Pan droes y don dros ei dir;"

a couplet which signifies "the sigh of Gwyddno Garanhir when the wave turned over his land."

And what of this Gwyddno Garanhir, and Caer Wyddno, his residence? He was the Prince or Lord of the Lowland Hundred, and Caer Wyddno, his stronghold, was a castle about which a town of some importance had clustered. Prince Gwyddno maintained a sumptuous court, made love and war, and was greatly beloved by his followers. The same fate which overtook Lyonesse burst upon his principality, but in this case at least warning was given some years before the disaster. It was evident that some measures to resist the sea's ever-increasing advances must be taken, and taken in good season. Wherefore the Welsh records tell us that Gyddno ordered a dam to be built, and himself superintended the building, even lending a hand in the work. As in Holland, tried and trusty warders were subsequently placed in charge of the flood-gates which were to control the sea; and for a short time all augured safety. But, on a certain night,

* Morris, the antiquary, mentions that two leagues east from Cardigan Isle lies Cribach road, where there was a town "before Cantref y Gwaelod was inundated."

Sicthenym, one of the custodians of this sea-defence, became intoxicated, and, neglecting the necessary precautions at the floodgates in the dam, the sea rushed through with such force as to blow up part of the wall and overflow the whole Hundred. Sixteen fortified towns and at least a thousand persons perished. The names of the towns are still preserved in the traditions of the Welsh people, and the disaster is finely depicted in an elegiac poem descriptive of the melancholy event.

Some of these towns are said to have been second to none in Britain, save Caerleon. The survivors of the catastrophe with great difficulty escaped to Ardudwy and Eryri; and Gwyddno, who was doubtless regarded by the people as having incurred Divine displeasure, became an outcast. Nevertheless, we are told of a son of his, Rhuvawn, whose corpse was ransomed with its own weight of gold. Of another son, Elphin, history and bardic lore also make mention. A weir in Conway, called after the luckless prince, Gwyddno, still remains to attest his memory.

According to Carlisle—

"Cantref y Gwaelod is supposed to have occupied that portion of St. George's Channel which lies between the mainland and a line drawn from Bardsey Isle to Ramsey, in the county of Pembroke, and the proprietor is called in ancient authors Lord of Cantref y Gwaelod in Dyved;"

this latter in old records always signifying the county of Pembroke. Giraldus confidently asserts that St. David's Head formerly extended

further into the sea, and that trunks of trees *with fresh marks of the axe were visible* in his day. As to this latter evidence, Camden remarks that—

"at such time as Henry II. was in Ireland, by reason of an extraordinary violence of storms, the sandy shores of this coast were laid bare, and the face of the land appeared, which had been covered for many ages; also the trunks of trees which had been cut down standing in the midst of the sea with the strokes of an axe as fresh as if they had been yesterday, with very black earth and several old blocks like ebony; so that it did not appear like the sea-shore, but rather resembled a grove, by a miraculous metamorphosis, perhaps ever since the time of the Deluge, or else long after, at least-wise very anciently, as well cut down as consumed and swallowed up by degrees, by the violence of the sea continually encroaching upon and washing off the land."

There is also recorded the saying of William Rufus when he first beheld Ireland from those rocks, that he "could easily make a bridge of ships whereby he might walk from England into that kingdom," which certainly seems to attest that no very great width of sea then separated the two islands at this point in the present Principality of Wales.

It has often happened that by some extraordinary violence of the waves, the beach has become suddenly, as it were, denuded of sand, at which times the remains of the former forest and vegetation become clearly revealed. An early instance of this sort happened in 1590;

and in a manuscript history of the country, penned shortly afterwards by one George Owen, we find it recorded that—

"about twelve or thirteen years since it happened that the sea sands at Newgal, which are covered every tide, were so washed off that there appear stocks of trees, doubtless in their native places, for they retained manifest signs of the strokes of the axe at the falling of them."

This, which so startled the antiquarian and historiographer three centuries ago, is now a sufficiently familiar spectacle, not merely in Wales, but off the coast in many different and widely-sundered parts of the kingdom. The existence of the extensive submarine forest of Cardigan Bay leaves no doubt that the seashore must have been a long distance from where these trees are found, as it is well known that the sea air is unfavourable to the growth of forest trees.

A curious circumstance which deserves mention of itself, but forms a strong component to the mass of proofs already adduced of the former existence of the Lowland Hundred in comparatively modern times, is that Bardsey Isle in Cardigan Bay, situate on the Carnarvon coast, and three miles from the mainland, is still considered a part of Pembrokeshire, *and pays its taxes, etc., as such*, although part of the coast of Carnarvonshire and the whole of the coast of Cardigan intervene between that island and the rest of the county of Pembroke!

Departing from the site of the vanished

Lowland Hundred, and passing the Menai Straits, which separate Anglesea from Carnarvonshire, it is observable that the shore-line between Dulas Bay and the Lavan Sands is very abrupt, and evinces great waste by long-continued sea-action. Puffin Island, for instance, which is formed of mountain limestone, has been severed from the chief mass of that deposit on the Anglesea side and Great Orme's

CHART OF THE SUBMERGED TRACT OFF THE COAST OF NORTH WALES.

Head. Such severances are not so much due to sudden elevations or depressions of coast as to the continued action of the sea in denuding the limestone rocks of Dulas Bay, Red Wharf, and other inlets along the coast.

We now approach the scene of another submerged countryside, and of another marine disaster, equal almost in extent to that which I have above briefly described. For just under

and adjoining the parish of Llanfairfechan and that of Aber is a large tract of land about twelve miles long by seven or eight in breadth, which was formerly the proud possession of Llys Helig ap Glanog, and which appears to have been inundated about the same time as Cantref y Gwaelod. It is now known as Traeth Llafan, or Lavan Sands. The Welsh signification of this term is Weeping Sands, indicating that the very earth laments the loss of a beautiful, smiling, and extensive country, and the death by drowning of so many of its people. In Abergele churchyard there was lately an epitaph on one of the tombstones as follows :—

"Yma mae'n gorwedd
Yu mynwent Mihangel,
Gur oedd ai anedd
Dair milldir yn y gogled."

The purport of this inscription is that the one who lies there buried lived three miles north of the spot. This would, of course, be far out to sea in the present day, as the breakers now reach near to the village of Abergele. It is worth noticing, too, that the bodies of oak trees, nearly, if not wholly entire, have been found at low water in a tract of hard loam, far distant from the present coast-line.

Leaving Wales, we next approach a district hardly to be exceeded in interest, if only for the visible proofs accessible to all visitors, both of the former and present inroads of the ocean.

The testimony which has been collected by various eminent men on the subject of this

encroachment of the sea in the locality here dealt with is very profuse. Even within quite modern times it has been shown that the coast-line and the area of the estuaries of the Mersey and Dee have been undergoing continual change, that the course of the channels had often changed, and many of the sand-banks removed or modified, as, for instance, Hoyle Sand, or Hoyle Bank, at the mouth of the estuary of the Dee, which a couple of centuries ago was a single bank, but has since been divided into two by marine action. As to the shore-line and condition of the aforesaid estuaries, we have for reference several maps and charts prepared within the period named, or, at furthest, only back to 1612. And both maps and written records agree in delineating the coast at the time, so that when we compare any of these with a plan of the coast as it is to-day, it is not difficult to perceive how great has been the modern devastation of the Wirral shore-line and the modification of the channels of the Dee and the Mersey. Formerly, from the Ribble to the Dee, and from a great distance seaward, extending inward up the valleys of these rivers, the country was clothed with trees. All this wooded country has now utterly disappeared, with the exception of the remnants visible at low tide, to which I shall hereafter refer.

Indeed, that the coast-line formerly projected much farther to seaward is no matter of opinion. It has been ascertained from the showing of ancient maps, the testimony of

historic records; a considerable portion of a race-course has been removed; a public road has been broken up and rendered useless; a burial-place has been carried away; it has been found necessary to build a large embankment against the sea. The inroads have continued day by day at the present time.

To seaward of the existing cultivated land and sandhills are found the remains, not of one, but of several forests of different growths, with their roots embedded in the soil in which they flourished. The remains of an ancient house, like the hall or proprietary mansion of the neighbourhood, existed until within the last century; and portions of buildings still standing contain some of its materials worked up in them. Moreover, an ancient well or spring of fresh water rises far within the area covered by the tide; and tradition declares that it was formerly covered by a brick archway, and that it was last used by the attendants on the light-house which has been obliterated. In order to illustrate the rapidity of the erosion, it may be mentioned that so late as 1863, at a point a little north of Hoylake, nearly sixty feet was wasted during one storm. At this point of the coast, Mr. Rollet, surveyor (formerly in charge of the Leasowe embankment), estimated the annual loss to be eighteen feet, which, if carried on for several centuries, would clearly devastate an important area of the Cheshire peninsula. It was with a view to arrest this wholesale devastation that, in the year 1829, the Corporation of Liverpool built the embankment

just referred to at Leasowe, at a cost of £20,000. It extends from Leasowe Castle in a south-westerly direction for a matter of two miles, and is the means, together with the flood-gates in Wallasey Pool, of saving 3000 acres from complete annihilation by the sea. Being below sea-level, the waterway in the coast thus protected, known as the river Birket, running from near the Dee on the west, across the flat ground to Wallasey, is nearly stagnant.

At Leasowe Castle, until recently the seat of the Cust family, the sea, fifty years ago, was half a mile distant from the walls. Now, but for the masonry embankment of the castle, the waves would sweep over them. Three centuries ago they were a mile and a half away from the ocean. The tourist sitting at low tide on the south-west end of the embankment, and gazing westward along the coast, may to-day behold, between the water's edge and the sandhills behind, a dark, unequal stretch of shore as far as Hoylake village. On the surface of this bed are visible the skulls and bones of deer, horse, and shoals of fresh-water shells, besides the flotsam and jetsam of innumerable shipwrecks during centuries. The kind of trees which once flourished here can be easily distinguished—oak, willow, alder, birch, and elm. Where Birkenhead Docks now are was once the heart of a forest of birch (Birchen Wood it was anciently called). As an old Cheshire rhyme has it—

"From Birchen Haven to Hilbre
A squirrel might hop from tree to tree."

That Wirral has long been in fear of Liverpool's great river finds an illustration

CHART OF THE WIRRAL DISTRICT OF CHESHIRE AND SUBMERGED COASTS.

in the following passage from Drayton's "Polyolbion":—

"Where Mersey, for more state,
Assuming broader banks, himself so proudly bears,
That at his stern approach extended Wirral fears
That what betwixt his floods of Mersey and of Dee
In very little time devoured he might be."

On the other side of Cheshire much land has been lately reclaimed, but none too soon for old Shotwick Church, which stands in all its huge loneliness to tell of the lost town of Shotwick. At Ince the abbots complained to Hugh Lupus that "they had lost by inundations of the sea thirty caracates of land, and were daily losing more."

William Webb, whose description of the whole country, written about 1615, is printed in the "King's Vale Royal," speaking of the mosses and "turves" at Dove, adds the following:—

"In these mosses, especially on the block, are fir-trees found under the ground (a thing marvellous!) in some places six feet deep or more, in others not one foot; which trees are of a surprising length and straight, having certain small branches like boughs, and roots at one end as if they had been blown down by winds; and yet no man can tell that ever any such trees did grow there, nor yet how they should come thither. Some are of opinion that *they have lain there ever since Noah's flood.* These trees being found (which the owners do search out with a long spit of iron or such like), they are then digged up, and first being sawn into short pieces (every piece of the length of a yard) then they cleave the said pieces very small, yea, even as the back of a knife, the which they use instead of a candle to burn, and they give very good light."

This submerged forest appears verily to have considerably puzzled this antiquarian; and that he should have attributed the inundation to the Scriptural Deluge is but another illustration of

my own belief that, so far from having, as Dr. Johnson thought, learnt all about the past, we actually move towards the truth in precise ratio as we chronologically recede from those events science and history now so forcibly illumine.

Twenty years later we come across a similar description in verse, with the intimation in the margin, "You may see this at a place called y^e^ Stocks in Worold."

"But greater wonder calls me hence: ye deepe
Low spongie mosses yet remembrance keepe
Of Noah's flood: on numbers infinite
Of fir-trees swaines doe in their cesses light
And in summer places, when ye sea doth bate
Down from ye shoare, 'tis wonder to relate
How *many thousands* of theis trees now stand
Black broken on their rootes, which once drie lande
Did cover, whence turfs Neptune yields to showe
He did not always to these borders flowe."

Hilbre is a little, miserable, uninhabited islet at the mouth of the Dee, of only a very few acres in extent; but it was formerly a portion of the mainland. Subsequently it became an island at least eight times its present size. Drayton calls it the "Corner of Werrall," and it appears joined to Cheshire as late as 1575, in an engraved map by Lhuyd, of that date. At a very early period there was a cell of monks here, and the derivation of the name is from their patron saint, St. Hildeburgh. But the latter does not appear to have maintained his spiritual and apostolic connection with the island, which in course of time began to be peopled and to

flourish. We are told that during the incumbency of Richard, second Norman Earl of Chester, or some little time previous to 1120, he was in danger at Basingwerk Abbey, near Holywell; and the Constable of Chester sailed out in search of ships along the right bank of the Dee, in order to go to the rescue of Richard in his predicament. But to his surprise and chagrin he found none; and had it not been for a miracle performed by St. Werburgh, in response to the intercession of a monk at Hibre, whereon the Constable of Chester landed, no relief would have been forthcoming. Thus runs the epic:—

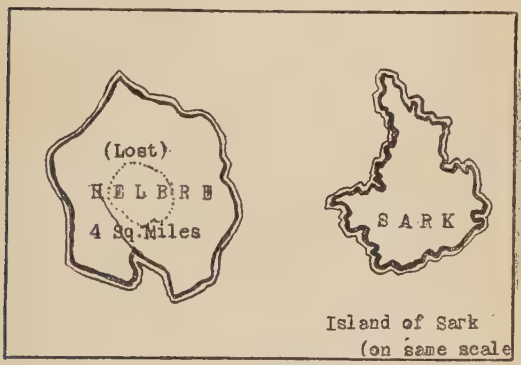
"The Constable congregate in all goodly haste
A myghtye stronge hoste in their best arraye
Toward Hilburgee on ironey ridyng fast,
Trusting upon shippes all them to convaye
Which was a riall rode that time nyght and daye,
And when they thedyr came, shyppying none there was
To carie all them over in convenient space."
Life of St. Werburge.

A new pathway across the Dee was raised up, known in after years as the "Constable's Sands," and over it the host traversed in safety.

Apart from its monks, its farmers, and possibly its mariners and artisans, Hilbre Island was a station for marine observation from very early times. Every ship from Chester (then a seaport) was visible, whether an east wind carried it by Chester bar and along the Welsh coast, or a west wind bore it through the Hoyle

lake and the Horse Channel to the sea. Sings Drayton—

"Out of the foaming surge, till Hilbre lifts his head
To let the foreland see how richly he has sped,
Which *Mersey* cheeres so much, that with a smiling browe
He fawnes on both these Floodes, their amorous arms that throwe."



No one looking at the miserable little remnant now left of Hilbre can well fancy these lines ever appropriate to such a spot; still less seems probable such an entry as the following by General Sir Henry Dockwra, in his Memoirs of the Tyrone Rebellion in Elizabeth's reign:—

"The army, consisting in list of 4000 foote and 200 horse, whereof 3000 of the foote and all the horse were levied in England, the other 1000 foote were taken of the old companys about Dublin . . was shipt at Helbre on the 24th of Aprille, 1600."

On this island, then some eight miles long by three broad, the troops had been quartered; and at this time Hilbre and its inhabitants were probably at the height of their prosperity and importance. It is unlikely that any sudden flood overtook Hilbre; the process of erosion and subsidence was doubtless comparatively slow, and is going on still, until a few barren acres are all that remain to testify to this once flourishing island.*

Leasowe plain appears to have been used as a race-course prior to 1601, and with that at Childwall in Lancashire constituted the two places for equestrian sports in this part of England. The dimensions are gradually being curtailed to vanishing-point, yet, when the Act respecting its enclosure came into operation in 1818, it was about two hundred and twenty acres in extent. It was then protected by the sand-hills on which star-grass was cultivated for the purpose of binding them; but in the year 1829 an important sea-wall was constructed, extending a mile and threequarters to the south-west, from opposite Leasowe Castle, at a charge of £20,000. It continued to be maintained in good condition by the Corporation of Liverpool; but the sea occasionally breaks over it. On the 14th of February, 1861, a fourteen-foot tide rose to nineteen feet, or was influenced to the

* A large Saxon cross of the red sandstone of the neighbourhood was found some years ago on Hilbre Island. It came into Dr. Hume's possession, who considers it the identical cross represented in Camden's map, and as marking the site of the holy place. The diameter of the cross is twenty-three inches.

extent of five feet by the winds. If this had occurred with a twenty-one feet spring tide, a great portion of the low land in the valleys of the Dee and Mersey would have been submerged.*

The size of the territory which formerly extended out into the Irish Sea we have no means of accurately computing, but within the past century or two we know the loss to have been so great that if the same rate of erosion has always or even approximately been maintained, many miles must certainly have fallen a prey to the waves. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for July, 1796, I have come across the following:—

"Whoever will survey that part of the Irish Sea now called the Liverpool Channel, which comprehends the openings or mouths of the Dee and Mersey, and the adjoining shores, will not find it difficult to suppose, from the violence of the north-west sea upon this regular and pent-up situation that what now forms the banks of Burbo and Hoyle may have been land attached to the peninsula of Cheshire, and the eastern banks attached in like manner to Crosby and Formby, with the river Mersey quietly running through them, in a narrow inconsiderable stream, until such time as the sea, having once gained an accidental advantage, must have laid the foundation for that large expanse of water before and above the town of Liverpool which, though bearing the name of a river, is in reality a portion of the sea. The like, it is probable, happened to the Dee; for, if we go a very few miles only up either of these apparently great rivers, we shall not find streams that shall satisfactorily of themselves account for such bodies

* Dr. Hume.

of water; and this is in some sort confirmed by the successful labours of the River Dee Company, who are daily gaining the ground that the ocean has formerly overwhelmed. The like may probably happen at the mouths of all rivers, but in different degree both as to extent and time."*

That this writer's supposition is in the main correct is attested, not merely by history, tradition, and geology, but also, as I have also shown, by maps not more than three hundred years old, wherein the Wirral peninsula embraces the district now known as the aforesaid marine banks. It appears that a portion of the shore, about ninety yards in breadth, was washed away between 1771 and 1792; that a second portion, somewhat larger, was eroded before September, 1813, and twenty yards more between that date and 1828. Thus we account for, by actual measurement by one person, in less than the average lifetime, a strip of land at least two hundred yards wide, which has been gradually eaten away by the sea. But since this period the devastation has been much greater, and Dr. Hume of Great Meols relates that on the 20th of January, 1863, the outer Dove Mark was washed away, with the whole of the high bank on which it stood; its site being about ten yards from the top of the hill, to the base of which the tide flows. On the same occasion about twenty yards of the shore, near the lifeboat-house, was washed away; so that

* Accompanying the article from which the above is quoted is a woodcut representing the remains of a submerged forest near Formby, Lancashire.

the house, which had previously been in a recess, then stood exposed.

In the surveys which were made by three eminent engineers for a ship canal to connect the Mersey and the Dee, one of them, Dr. Nimmo, discovered a number of human skeletons, nearly opposite the Leasowe lighthouse, and at a distance of nearly two hundred yards below the flow of the tide. Their number, together with the regularity with which they were deposited, leave no doubt in the mind that this was an ancient place of sepulture. This spot would be within the shore-line of 1771, the "upper surface of which was not actually carried away, but lowered and displaced, by the removal of the subjacent beds, or otherwise."

In our itinerary of the coast of England, this is the first mention which the reader will meet with of a circumstance common enough elsewhere: the posthumous burial of human remains in the waters of the ocean. In many places and among many peoples the greatest repugnance, born of superstition, exists against the sea as a place of sepulture; and this prejudice (not shared, however, I may remark in parenthesis, by Sir Anthony Gloster, the hero of Mr. Kipling's ballad) extends beyond the social boundaries of the peasant class. It is strange, therefore, to reflect on the many thousands of such buried persons, who, after they had been for many years interred in quiet village churchyards far from the sea, should meet finally with that cardinal object of their repugnance, and even horror, *a watery grave!*

The submerged tract of land in the vicinity of Hoylake had often been the scene of bustling importance and of historical events.* Says a Cheshire antiquary, writing of the locality of Great Meols, on the plain of the Wallsey Leasowe—

"Within the limits of a single century we show that many thousands of soldiers and civilians, infantry and cavalry, passed near or over the spot; and therefore vast and varied must have been the multitude, notwithstanding the scantiness of population which, during at least two thousand years, trod its sands, or rested beneath the foliage of its forest trees, or sailed upon its waters."

Of Hoyle Island, now a sandbank, formerly inhabited, and a fertile tract where the farmer held sway, the only record we possess is in the shape of a map, formerly in Mostyn Hall, Flintshire, and the various homely relics of other days which have been picked up within the last few decades on its site. The map depicts cattle grazing upon the land of Hoyle Island; and the present size of the bank, as shown in modern charts, would lead one to suppose that the surface was of even greater extent than Hilbre Island at its prime.

Among the submerged towns on the Cheshire coast is probably ancient Meols, which has already been mentioned in the course of this

* "On Wednesday, June 12, in the morning, His Majesty (William III.), accompanied with His Royal Highness the Prince of Denmark, and several other persons of quality, embarked at Hoylake."—*Mullenaux's Journal.*

chapter. At low water, even far out, so many Roman objects have been discovered that it is certain that an important maritime station was here. When the land projected further out it gave a full view of a long range of coast. Sir Charles Lyell mentions an old tradition respecting Dunwich (whose fate will be described in a later chapter), that the tailors could sit in their shops there, and see the ships entering Yarmouth bay. In such wise might the centurion of the Cæsars have planted himself on the coast of ancient Meols (called Melas in Domesday Book), and have seen the galleys of his countrymen sail down Chester Water. Turning to the west, they passed along the Cambrian coast, or if to the east, round Hilbre Island; now, time has carried away Roman, observatory, and the coast itself, and the only prospect is water and sand. There appears to have been a high sandy promontory hereabouts, of which Dove Spit is all that remains; and on account of the violence of frequent tides it is gradually lessening in extent. On this promontory Dr. Hume believes ancient Melas was situated. The unsubstantial materials of which it was composed, like the hill of Dunwich, presented facilities for its destruction. The inhabitants realized literally the effect of building their houses upon the sand. Nevertheless, this elevation, of whatever height, was covered with trees, in the shelter of which the people wandered, and near which their cottages were placed. Inasmuch as the ancient Roman roads were afterwards used by the Saxons, and often continue to form the

leading lines of communication in our own day, it is natural and reasonable to infer that the village, the seashore, the woodland parks, the burial-ground, etc., were used not only by successive generations, but by successive peoples. Thus the finding of objects differing in nationality as well as in date is accounted for.

Mortimer confidently advances the theory that the present estuary of the Dee did not exist at the time of the Romans, but that a bog or morass then occupied much of the space from Weston Point towards Eastham, and that it was bounded on the north by Lancashire and Cheshire, through the latter of which the waters forced a passage by Braxton to the Dee. The traditions which for ages have existed, that the two countries were at one period connected, until rent asunder by some violent inundation, probably in the fifth century, derive confirmation from the remains of trees and animals found hereabouts.

When we cross the Mersey into Lancashire we find here also numerous evidences of submerged forests, villages, and castles. At least one important town, Formby, which was destroyed, not by water, but by sea-sand, has since been resurrected. This place, to which a brief allusion has previously been made (p. 53), is situated about nine miles from Liverpool. It is related that in 1745 some military officers, who were stationed with their regiment in South Lancashire during the troubles connected with the Pretender, were "quartered in the ancient village of Formby." By the year 1787 only a

single cottage remained on the borders of the ancient graveyard, and the aged man who occupied it told a visitor that his father's house originally stood almost in the centre of the town. The desertion of the place had consequently occurred in the course of a single lifetime. Mountains of drift-sand covered the site of the town, its church and churchyard. Although numerous trunks of large trees are found under high-water mark, as on the Cheshire coast, hardly a solitary shrub soon came to flourish in the vicinity of the sand.

As pathetic memorials of the vanished town of Formby, the sandy lanes, which one was able to tread only with difficulty, were called by the names of streets, as Church Street, Duke Street, etc. Vessels of every size shunned the coast, not less for its dangers than its desolation. Another township hard by, that of Ravens Meols, is mentioned in the Domesday Survey, but it had also vanished into the sea, although the name has been preserved, as have the names of the lost towns on the East Coast; and a little church was erected for the benefit of the farmers and cottagers near the shore, about the middle of the last century.

Of the ancient town of Fornebei, British, Roman, Saxon, Danish and English, once of probably far greater extent than Lowerpool—where now are clustered nearly a million souls, and the ships of every port and clime—hardly a vestige remained a generation since. Of later years, however, it is interesting to note that the further devastation by the sand has been

arrested, and as a thriving seaside resort a new Formby promises to exceed in prosperity its ancient namesake. Formby deserves to be remembered with reverence throughout this kingdom, inasmuch as it was doubtless on the site of the present town, or but little westward, that the potato was first planted in England by a Formby man, who sailed in Sir Walter Raleigh's expedition.

All along the coast of Lancashire, northward, one comes across ocular evidences or well-founded traditions where no actual written record exists of lands submerged. As I have had occasion before to observe, and doubtless will again, so striking does such an omission appear, writers of history, geology, topography, and antiquities, not merely of Lancashire, but of many of the other maritime counties of England, appear altogether to neglect an opportunity which it seems to me they should have seized with avidity. Upon the subject of the present volume they are, for the most part, strangely silent. When they do—when, indeed, they are *obliged* to touch upon it—they often dismiss both the theories of science and the testimony of the old writers as "legends" or as exaggerations. One would have imagined that the huge topographical histories of Lancashire, by Baines, father and son, would have devoted a considerable niche in that monumental space to a narrative of and an inquiry into the alteration in the coast-line of the country since the Roman era, or since the Conquest. But the matter seems never to have occurred to them, or it

was dismissed as frivolous. Yet the Palatinate would appear to have lost many thousands, if not tens of thousands of acres within comparatively modern times; and history records from time to time mighty upheavals of the sea, which have destroyed much important territory. In fact, in some parts to-day it is a sharp contest between Neptune and man. On the isle of Walney, which is ten miles long by one broad, the abbots of Furness, we read, erected dikes to prevent the irruption of the sea at high tides; but after the dissolution of the monastery these precautions became neglected, and the sea has several times since flowed over the island, doing enormous damage. Inundations of this sort occurred in 1771, 1796, and 1821, in which latter year the sea broke down part of the dike.

"The isle of Walney lies, whose longitude doth swage
His fury, when his waves on Furnesse seem to warre,
Whose crooked back is armed with many a crooked scarre,
Against his boystrous shocks, which this defensive isle
Of Walney still assayle, that shee doth scorne the while."

CHAPTER III

"All dwellings else
Flood overwhelmed, and with them all their pomp
Deep under water rolled; sea covered sea."

So great have been the ravages of the sea on the shores of Yorkshire, more particularly the peninsula of Holderness, as to render it difficult at this day to fix even with tolerable accuracy the sites of several towns, which were once famous throughout the county.

Indeed, the celebrity of one of these submerged towns was not even confined to the kingdom. When we reflect on the illustrious figure played in British annals by Ravenspur, where three royal aspirants landed with their followers, and which was the starting-point of three revolutions, each of which ended in subverting a dynasty, it is impossible not to marvel that more is not generally known concerning it.

But now the site of Ravenspur, together with no fewer than twelve other towns and villages in the district, is hidden by the waves.

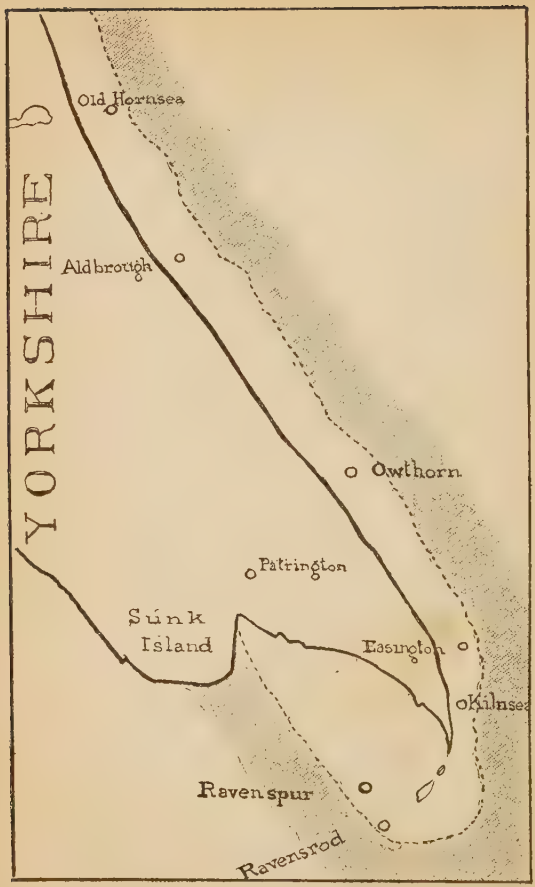
The name of this ancient and celebrated place, originally the Prætorium of the Romans, was altered by the Danish conquerors. The Danes bore in their national standard the figure of a raven; and when, in their attacks upon the people of Holderness, they landed at the first seaport within the Humber, they are supposed to have fixed their standard there, and to have

called the place Ravensburg. Subsequently, as Christianity spread, a cross was probably erected, and the termination *burg* (*i.e.* city, town, or fortified place) changed to *rod* or *rode*, "a cross." At a still later period, for the new town which had sprung up, the termination *spur*, or *spurne* (a place from which to spy out or explore) was adopted. Elsewhere, we find the old town called Ravenser or Ravenseret, from the Saxon "syret" (a place of shelter). All this accounts for the various forms of the name of the two towns which are met with in the old authorities.

Ravensburg (afterwards Ravensrod) was a seaport and market-town on the bank or margin of the Humber, within the ancient Spurn Head, and much within the site of the present light-houses at the Spurn Point, and is now buried in the Trinity Sands or sunk in the Humber.

Within the Spurn is an oblique hollow place in the sand, of considerable extent, known as the old Den (probably from "den"—Saxon—"a valley or dale"), and it is supposed that Ravenspur stood in or near the old Den. Indeed, some fishermen, less than a century ago, related that they could see there, at low water in the Humber, fragments of walls and other remains of buildings.

In 1251 there was certainly a manor here called Rowenserat, held by the Lord of Holderness; and from the chartulary of the Abbey of Meaux it appears that William de Fortibus gave to the monks at Meaux half an acre of land, in a place which was called the "burg of Odd,


YORKSHIRE
Old Hornsea
Aldbrough
Owthorn
Patrington
Sunk Island
Easington
Kilnsea
Ravenspur
Ravensrod

near Ravenser," where the said monks might erect buildings for the preservation of herrings and other fish for the use of the Abbey.

It is not unlikely that this had reference to the place which, as I have shown, afterwards became known as Ravenser Odd.

When Edward I. directed the sheriffs to summon every city and borough to send representatives to Parliament, Ravenser and Hedon in Holderness were summoned and obeyed, although many places refused to send members, from a suspicion that the Parliament was called principally or solely for the purpose of levying taxes. Peter Attesee and William Pailebone were the first members *pro libertate Ravenser*. Two members afterwards continued to be returned from this borough.

In the reign of Edward I. the men of Ravenspur applied for and obtained the privilege of being constituted a free borough. For this extraordinary privilege the burgesses paid £300, while the men of Hull obtained a similar privilege on payment of only 100 marks. From this might be concluded the relative wealth and importance of the two places. As a matter of fact, Ravenspur had risen suddenly to the enjoyment of great commercial prosperity, and had become a formidable rival to the King's ports of Grimsby, Hedon, and Scarborough. Its merchants, neglecting no means of increasing their traffic, were willing to purchase their liberties at a price equivalent to the privileges to be conferred; while Hull would naturally avail itself of the peculiar claim

it had on the royal favour, in the circumstance of its having so recently become a Crown manor. By the same charter was given the privilege of holding a fair at Ravenser every year—

"and that the fair should begin on the eve of the Nativity of our Lady, continuing for thirty following days; for that time will be very profitable to the King; and also a market two days in every week, that is to say, on Tuesday and Saturday; and that they may be free of tonnage."

When these annual fairs, which continued for two or three weeks, were first instituted, there were comparatively few shops in the large towns. Consequently, persons from private families in the country, as well as from the monasteries and religious houses, attended these fairs for the purpose of purchasing supplies on a wholesale scale.

At the commencement of the reign of Edward II. Ravenspur appears to have been a seaport of considerable importance. In 1510 several merchants of the town complained to the King of depredations committed on their commerce by the subjects of the Count of Holland. From this record it appears that Peter Attesee and John, his son, Walter de Cakhowe, John de Bradele, Thomas de Hamelmere, Richard Trunk, and John Treuthemer, burgesses and merchants of this port, were plundered of goods and merchandise to the value of £461 14*s.* 8*d.* Reparation was duly made.

The year 1332 was marked by a scene of

great interest, and picturesque, as well as of historical importance. It was the first of those events concerned with thrones and kingdoms which was to make Ravenspur celebrated.

In that year Edward Balliol, who had lived in obscurity in France for several years, was induced to assert his right to the crown of Scotland. His father had been dethroned in that kingdom, and the son was ambitious to recover his rights. In this project he was secretly encouraged by Edward III. Balliol made all the preparations in his power, being assisted by the lords Beaumont, Wake, Mowbray, and others, and assembled his forces in Yorkshire. As the aforesaid nobles were apprehensive that the Scottish frontiers would be safely guarded, they resolved to make their attack by sea. When more than 2500 men * had been collected, they marched into Ravenspur preparatory to embarkation from that port.

It is not difficult to believe that such an event seemed tremendous to the people of Ravenspur. The presence of so large a military force, 2000 of whom were archers, and the valour and address of the Scottish Pretender and his men-at-arms, must have created a profound impression. In addition were the many ships and sailors in the haven, which for some days had been collecting and preparing for the expedition. In short, many a man and maid in Ravenspur must have awaited anxiously the tidings which soon afterwards came, that Balliol had reached his

* Lingard says 3000.

destination, and had been crowned King of Scotland.*

Nor can Ravenspur be mentioned at this period without an allusion to the De la Poles, ancestors of an historic race, resident here.

In the reign of Edward III. Sir William de la Pole was a merchant of great enterprise and great riches. Camden informs us, from the register of Meaux Abbey, that he was first a merchant at Ravenspur, inferior to none in England in the knowledge of trade. His son was made a knight banneret, and his grandson rose to be Earl of Suffolk. It appears that the second of this illustrious family, also a William—

"lent many thousand pounds to King Edward, during his stay in Andewerp, in Brabant, in return for which money the King appointed him Chief Baron of the Exchequer, and gave him the whole lordship of Holdernesse, with other lands belonging to the Crown, by royal charter, and made him a banneret."

In 1335 William de la Pole was appointed Commissioner and Manager-General of the Exchanges. His brother seems to have been almost equally able, and in 1336 both are seen to be farming the customs of a neighbouring town, of which they had obtained a royal grant, at a rent of £10 a day. He afterwards became the first Mayor of Hull, and died very wealthy, full of years and honours.

About the time that Sir William de la Pole

* Balliol was King of Scotland for a few weeks only, but was supported in his title by the King of England for several years afterwards.

was a flourishing magnate in Ravenspur, the mercantile marine and the King's navy began to grow. Many of the English vessels, and particularly those belonging to Yarmouth, Bristol, Lynn, Kingston-upon-Hull, and Ravensere were now (anno 1335) distinguished as ships of war—*naves guerrinæ*. Whether these were of different construction from others, or only the largest and strongest of the mercantile vessels, is not known.

But it was in 1336 that the King, alarmed by the rumours of armaments on the Continent, sent orders to all the maritime cities and towns in the kingdom to oblige the owners of ships to fit out every vessel in their ports in a sufficient manner with men, arms, and stores, enumerating in this order Ravenspur and Grimsby. Again, in 1341, King Edward wrote ordering that deputies be sent to Westminster from the chief seaports, in order to inform him of the state of shipping in their respective ports. Ravenspur duly despatched a deputy to this first Naval Parliament.

It is soon after this, while the town is at the height of its prosperity, that Father Neptune sounded his first awful note of warning, and to those who could perceive it, of doom. But before we speak of this, let us try to conjure up a picture of the town in the flower of its age.

There were two chief streets and many lanes and alleys. Churches in every mediæval form there were in plenty, and Ravenspur, on account of its antiquity, could hardly have boasted of

fewer than four or five. There was a gate at either end of the town, at one of which, just without the walls, probably, stood the leper-house of the Knights Hospitallers. At a later day there was built a chapel near the sea dedicated to the Virgin. The harbour must have been capacious, and lined with well-kept quays and shipping. There were several inns, in the courtyard of one of which the strolling monks were wont to present one of their miracle plays at intervals to a gaping audience of burgesses, yeomen, traders, sailors, women, and children. At seaport towns there was always a profusion of minstrels, ballad-mongers, and purveyors of charms and relics.

In the trade of exporting wool the town of Ravenspur would probably have considerable share, as the sheep in Holdernesse were, it is said, of a larger size, and produced a larger quantity of wool, than the sheep kept on higher lands, in other parts of Yorkshire. Wool export was at this time the chief part of the county's trade.

It was a Ravenspur man, John Taverner, son of Thomas Taverner, member of Parliament for Ravenspur, who built the *Grace Dieu*, the largest merchant ship of his times, and in acknowledgment of his enterprise Henry VI. granted her owner exemption from staple duty—"a clear proof," says Macpherson, "that no such vessel had hitherto been built in England."

When the first serious onslaught was made by the waves on this prosperous Yorkshire town

is not known. It is, of course, beneath the dignity of history, which only deals with kings, nobles, and battles; but we learn that as early as 1346 a confirmation was made by the Chapter of York respecting the appropriation of the church at Easington, made by William, Archbishop of York, to the Abbey of Meaux.* This grant specifies the manors of Salthagh, Tharlesthorpe, Frismersk, Wythefleet, Dymelton, and Ravensrodd (Odd Ravenser) in Holderness as ancient endowments of the abbey, and as having been greatly reduced in value by the encroachments of the sea.

"And what is worse," says the confirmation, "from day to day these places become so far waste, being tossed by impetuous waves every day and night, that within a very short time it may be feared that they will be altogether destroyed and consumed."

This destruction of so close a neighbour, and indeed offshoot, as Ravensrodd, must have spread deep consternation among the people of Ravenspur. Ravensrodd had grown to be an important place on its own account, and had excited, too, the jealousy and apprehension of Hull and Grimsby. The burgesses of Grimsby, as early as the 4th of Edward I., had an inquest taken before the hundredors, which states that

* The monks of Meaux in Holderness were Cistercians, as appears from Burton's "Monast. Ebor." and other authorities. Their habit was a white robe, in the nature of a cassock, girt with a black girdle of wool. The monastery here was founded by William, Earl of Albemarle, in the Conqueror's time.

Grimsby and the surrounding country were then suffering an annual loss of £100 from the forestalling carried on at Ravensrodd, as it appears that the inhabitants of the latter town were in the habit of going out in their boats to intercept vessels on the high seas, when on their way to Grimsby with merchandise, and that they resorted to force, when stratagem and persuasion failed to induce the crews to change their course, and bring their cargoes to Ravensrodd for sale. It was situated in the farthest limits of Holderness, between the sea and the river Humber, and was distant from the mainland rather more than a mile. The access to it was from Ravenspur, by a sandy road covered with round yellow stones, and only slightly elevated above sea-level. It was situated about four miles from the old town, in the parish of Easington. It was by no means an immediate suburb. Close to the two places stood the distinct towns of Kilnsea and Sunthorpe.

Ravensrodd did not really disappear until 1396, or three years before the landing and reception of Henry IV. at Ravenspur, but we read that in 1346 an "inquisition" was taken at Ravensrodd concerning the impoverished state and partial destruction of the said town. The burgesses examined declared upon oath that two parts and more of the tenements and soil of the town had "been beaten down and carried away" by the sea, and "that the said town is daily diminished and carried away." They also averred that many of the inhabitants had

withdrawn themselves, their goods and their chattels, as—

"the dangers there continue to increase from day to day, who were previously accustomed to bear the burdens of the said town, and are gone to dwell elsewhere. So that there does not remain a third part of the inhabitants with their goods, who are in any manner able to sustain the present charges and assessments."

But Ravenspur itself, although warned by the fate of Ravensrodd, was spared awhile. In 1355 a storm came which threatened, and indeed devastated one of the principal burial-grounds. The Abbot of Meaux was thereupon directed to gather up the bodies of the dead which had been buried in the churchyard at Ravenspur, and which by reason of inundations were then washed up and uncovered, and to bury them in another parish.*

In the following year, or in 1357, the tides are said to have risen higher by four feet than formerly; in spite of which Ravenspur does not seem to have greatly suffered by a calamity which precipitated the ruin of several other places on the coast. Among these towns Camden mentions Frismarsh, Redmare, Pennyswerll, Upsal, and Potterfleet, of which to-day not a single trace is to be found.

Ravenspur had, however, perhaps already begun to lose something of its pristine glory,

* It is by no means clear to my mind that this reference, which I find in Torres MSS. 1555, is not to Ravensrodd. The two places are continually subject to confusion, even in Camden, Leland, and other Itineraries.

when an event happened at the close of the fourteenth century which promised once more to kindle the decaying splendours of the ancient town. In 1399, Bolingbroke, Duke of Lancaster, afterwards Henry IV., landed here from France with a gorgeous retinue, and was immediately joined by many noblemen, including the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland.

Shakespeare,* in his play of *Richard III.*, puts the following speech into the mouth of the Earl of Northumberland :—

"Away with me in post to Ravenspurg ;
But if you faint, as fearing to do so,
Stay and be secret, and myself will go."
Act ii. sc. 1.

* Many are the references made by the National Bard to Ravenspur, as in the following :—

"The banish'd Bolingbroke repeals himself,
And with uplifted arms is safe arriv'd
At Ravenspurg."
Richard II., act ii. sc. 2.

"But he, my lord, is gone to Ravenspurg,
To offer service to the Duke of Hereford ;
And sent me over by Berkley, to discover
What power the duke of York had levied there ;
Then with direction to repair to Ravenspurg."
Ibid., act ii. sc. 3.

"But, I bethink me, what a weary way
From Ravenspurg to Cotswold."
Ibid.

". . . where I first bowed my knee
Unto this king of smiles, this Bolingbroke,
When you and he came back from Ravenspurg."
Henry IV., act i. sc. 3.

"When I from France set foot at Ravenspurg."
Ibid., act ii. sc. 3.

This proceeding was a fateful one in English history. Henry Bolingbroke was the banished son of John of Gaunt, and on the death of the latter determined to assert his claim to the crown. In this project he was succoured by the Percy family. Never, says Drayton in his Epistle of Queen Isabel to Richard II.—

> "Never durst he attempt our hapless shore,
> Nor set his foot on fatal Ravenspore,
> Had not the Piercies promis'd aid to bring
> Against their oath unto their lawful king."

Holinshed relates that the Duke of Lancaster landed at Ravenspur with about three score persons, and was joyfully received by the lords, knights, and gentlemen, and forthwith assembled a great number of people, and was joined by the lords of Lincolnshire and of other counties, as the lords Willoughby, Ros, d'Arcy and Beaumont.

With banners and standards flying, and amid the blare of trumpets and the acclamations of the people of the countryside, the future monarch entered the gates, and passed through the streets of Ravenspur.

But the royal entry was not to pass without an interesting and curious episode, illustrative of the times. Certain workmen were observed—masons, carpenters, and others—standing by the foundations of a new building. The duke, instantly remarking the scene, inquired the nature of the structure. Whereupon a monk, Matthew

Danthorpe by name, came forward and stated that he was erecting a chapel to the Virgin Mary on the spot.

"Have you the King's sanction to build this chapel at Ravenspur?" asked Henry.

"No," faltered the monk.

"Then you must obtain it. How dare any priest build churches or chapels in this realm without the King's permission?"

None the less, for all he seemed so wroth, ere he left Ravenspur Henry summoned the offending monk, and told him to go on with his labour. The noblemen and courtiers there assembled naturally took that as a significant omen, in spite of the duke's avowed disposition towards Richard. And, indeed, one of Henry's first acts, if, indeed, it was not his first act, was to despatch a pardon and permission to Matthew, the monk of Ravenspur.* More than this, King Henry granted to the priest and

* "Whereas, Matthew Danthorpe, Hermit, hath begun to build a new chapel in Ravenspurgh, at which, on our last coming to England, we landed (our license not being obtained on this matter), which he purposeth to finish to his great cost and expense, as we have heard.

"For the love of God and the blessed Virgin Mary, in whose honour the chapel aforesaid, so begun, is to be erected; and also that the said Matthew may possess a more free and zealous mind, to proceed in the completion of the same chapel; of our superior grace, we have pardoned and remitted to the said Matthew all manner of transgressions and misprisions on his part committed, and whatsoever he hath forfeited to us, or whatever penalty he hath incurred on the aforesaid occasions, etc. etc.

"Witness the King, at Westminster, this 1st of October, 1399. By the King Himself."

his fellows and their successors all sea-wrecks and waifs, and other profits and advantages accruing upon the shore, for two leagues around the same place, for ever—no mean gift. The monk, as perhaps Henry had expected, not to be outdone, or as a token of gratitude, caused the chapel to be continued in commemoration of the King's landing. Carte, however, in his "History of England," says that Henry IV. founded a chapel at Ravenspur to hallow in the eyes of the people his rebellious enterprise. But although this seems to be a mistake, there is no doubt that Henry regarded the building of the chapel as a happy augury, although, as it proved, a false one. There is no doubt that throughout his life and reign he continued to regard Ravenspur in a peculiar way, as identified with his fortunes; and on his death we find his son, Henry V., granting, as one of his first acts on ascending the throne, certain privileges, amongst which to erect a pharos, or lighthouse, for the preservation of the lives of persons on that coast—at Ravenspur, at which the King landed on his last coming. Perhaps Henry V. shared the same feeling concerning the town; and this was an act of filial piety.

It is certainly significant that a similar proceeding—almost, it would appear, in the nature of a rite—should also occur early in the reign of his successor. Yet a grant is mentioned (6th Henry VI., anno 1428) in aid of the building of a tower at Ravenspur.* This new lighthouse, doubtless dedicated to the memory

* "Calend. Rotulorum Patentium," p. 274.

of Henry IV., was the cause of preventing numerous wrecks and saving many lives.

But the personal connection of Ravenspur with royalty was not yet over. Edward IV. was declared King in 1461, and Henry VI. deposed. The nation was plunged into bloodshed, and the wars between the houses of York and Lancaster —the white rose and the red—desolated the land, and nearly exterminated the ancient nobility. Little, however, could Edward dream that the distant town of Ravenspur and he were to make intimate acquaintance. Indeed, the trouble which caused Edward to flee from his throne began in this quarter of the realm in 1469, by the insurrection of the Yorkshire farmers. The following year the Earl of Warwick returned from France, and as he was a great favourite in the nation, the people resorted to him, until he found himself surrounded by 60,000 men. King Edward was in great perplexity how to act at this juncture, and hastened into the country to get advice from his friends. While he was in Lincolnshire, news was brought him that the whole realm was in an uproar, that the people made fires and sang songs, crying, "King Henry, King Henry! A Warwick, a Warwick!" War was, in sooth, proclaimed against him, and Edward was counselled to flee for his life. He came to Lynn, in Norfolk, where an English ship was ready to sail for Holland. The King, disguised, went on board, without money or baggage, and soon arrived safely on the Continent. Henry was then brought out of the Tower, to the cries

of "God save the King!" by the Earl of Warwick, Edward was declared a traitor, and Warwick made governor or regent of the kingdom.

But Edward did not despair, and soon made haste to recover his crown. He gathered together eighteen ships and 2000 soldiers, and sailed back to England, landing "within Humber, on Holdernesse side, at a place called Ravenspurgh, even in the same place where Henry, after called King Henry IV., landed." * Thus Ravenspur, the doomed city, came to be made the landing-place of three princes, who, overcoming opposition, ascended each a throne. The debarkation took place on the 14th March, 1471.

"Well have we pass'd, and now repass'd the seas,
And brought desir'd help from Burgundy:
What then remains, we being thus arriv'd
From Ravenspurg haven."

King Henry VI., act iv. sc. 7.

* "He told me as we rode to Chester that Merlin and Bede had, from the time in which they lived, prophesied of the taking and ruin of the King; and that if I were in his castle he would show it to me in form and manner, as he had seen it come to pass, saying this:—

"There shall be a king in Albion who shall reign for the space of twenty or two and twenty years in great honour and in great power, and shall be allied and united with those of Gaul; which King shall be undone *in the parts of the north in a triangular place.*"

I leave it to the antiquaries to decide whether or not this passage in an early volume of *Archæologia* of the old chronicle dealing with Richard II. relates to Ravenspur. At any rate, it is not unnatural, but in the highest degree likely, that the place of the landing of his usurper should occupy a certain place in the thoughts of the deposed King.

In Stow's Chronicle we have the following account of the landing of King Edward IV. at Ravenspur. A very different reception it was that this monarch received from that accorded his Lancastrian predecessor.

"King Edward, with the Lord Hastings, the Lord Say, nine hundred Englishmen, and three hundred Flemings would have landed in Essex, but there the Earl of Oxford's brother put them off, and after he landed, sore weather-beaten, at Ravensburgh, within Humber, on Holdernesse, and there rose on him Holdernesse men, whose Captain was Sir John Westerdale, a priest, after cast into the Marshalsea at London."

Another chronicler informs us that King Edward IV.—

"sailed into England and came on the coast of Yorkshire, to a place called Ravensburgh, and there setting all his men on land, he consulted with his captains to know to what place they should first for succour resort unto; for he imagined that no way could be for him sure, having so small a company of soldiers."

After long debating, we are told, it was concluded that diverse persons having light horses should scour the country on every side, to see if by any persuasions they might allure the hearts of the rustical and uplandish people to take King Edward's part, and to wear harness in his quarrel; which with all diligence followed his commission. The light horsemen which were sent about, after they had felt the minds and

LANDING OF EDWARD IV. (*Harleian MS.*)

intents of the rude people as much as they might, returned to King Edward the next day, making relation that all the towns* round about were permanent and stiff on the part of King Henry, and could not be removed; and that it was but a folly farther to solicit or attempt them, considering that when they were nerved and exhorted to be true to King Edward, not one man durst speak for fear of the Earl of Warwick. Which answer, it is added, when King Edward had perfectly digested it, of very necessity changed his purpose, and he now caused it to be published that he only claimed the Duchy of York.

"Touching the folks of the country, there came few or none to him, but," says old Holinshed, "they suffered him to pass, not seeking to annoy him. And afterwards, when they thought he claimed only what was his right, they began to like his cause, and six or seven thousand men who had been gathered in divers places, chiefly under the command of a priest and of a gentleman called Martine de la Mare on purpose to have stopt his passage, took occasion to assist him. He then marched forward till he came to Beverlie, which stood in his direct way to York. He sent to Kingston-upon-Hull, distant from thence six miles, but the inhabitants would not receive him."

Sir Martin de la Mare died in the year 1494,

* These towns were Kilnsea, Owthorne, Barmston, Withernsea, and Frismarsh. King Edward presumably remained at Ravenspur, which, in spite of the inimical conduct of the valorous rector, Sir John Westerdale, remained neutral, and was even disposed to look kindly upon Edward.

and was buried at Barmston, in Holderness, where his monument may yet be seen.

After King Edward had thus conciliated the Holderness men they allowed him to proceed quietly to Beverley, from whence he went to York and proclaimed himself King.* Then followed the battle of Barnet (in which Warwick was slain) and the supposed murder of Henry VI. Nevertheless, it is said that Edward never forgave the Holdernesse men, and if it be true that he launched a curse upon them and their lands, there never was a malediction so literally fulfilled.

For the sound of the trumpets and drums and the marching men of Edward's army had scarce died away in the ears of the burgesses of Ravenspur ere the angry sea began to finish the fell work it had commenced a century before. Not only Ravenspur, but such other towns and villages as had not yet suffered from the "rage and surgies" of the ocean, saw their own doom in the advancing tide.

All information as to the precise date of the final destruction of Ravenspur, as a seaport, is probably lost. Some record may, however, remain among the archives of Government, or in the hands of some private landowner, but if so, it has not yet been made public. My own conclusions point to its having been submerged about 1530. As it is not even mentioned by Holinshed, it may be inferred that it did not exist at the time that writer compiled his

* "The Coming of King Edward IV." (Camden Society).

Chronicle, although Leland, at an earlier date, mentions it in his Itinerary. "The River Hull," says he, "kepith yn the march of Holdernes to the very mouth of Hulle Haven, and thens the Marche of Holderness is to Ravenspur." It is interesting to learn from a gentleman,* resident in Easington, during the past century that—

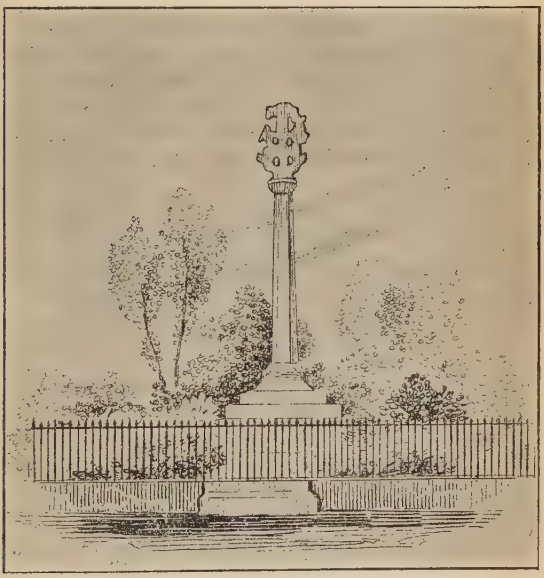
"in digging on a place within the present Spurn Point, called the Old Den, we found Ashlar stone, chiselled and laid in lime; seemingly the foundation of some building of note; the heads of the piles also having been found. The Old Den is a singular ridge of gravel, full half a mile long and not more than seventy or eighty yards broad, and raised about three feet above the mud-banks by which it is surrounded. The shape of this ridge is half a circle, the open side facing the shore, and a channel, since my remembrance, between it and the shore, but the north-east end is now warped up."

There is little doubt in my mind that this was the remains either of the chapel or the tower of the monks, or both; for it is by no means unlikely that with the destruction of the town the structure on its verge, connected, as I have related, with the landing of Henry IV., should have offered an excellent site for the creation of old Reedbarrow's pharos.

Apart from this relic, now submerged, what exists to-day to attest the former glories of Ravenspur? A worn and crumbling cross, which once reared itself before the church, or in the High Street, to commemorate the landing

* William Child, Esq.

of Henry of Lancaster. On the destruction of the town, this splendid cross (of which a drawing is herewith presented) was removed to Kilnsea, and from thence, to preserve it from being washed away by the sea, in turn to Burton



Constable and Hedon. Some authorities seem to be in doubt as to which monarch, York or Lancastrian, the cross was designed to honour. Apart from the fact of Edward's unpopularity, surely the fact that a grant for rebuilding a

hermitage at *Ravenscrosbourne*, conceded in 1413, would seem to indicate a suburb or locality taking its name from this identical cross. The beautifully sculptured head of this cross and the one found at Leven have similar groups of figures, and the cross on one of the shields of each is similar. If it be heraldic it corresponds with that of the Nevil family. Ralph Nevil, Earl of Westmorland, was one of the firm supporters of Henry IV., which seems to confirm the hypothesis that this cross, now at Hedon, was erected to commemorate the landing of Henry of Lancaster at Ravenspur.*

CHAPTER IV

THE destruction of land—even of towns and villages—upon the Yorkshire coast has been incessant. In a map carefully prepared by J. Tuke in 1786 the following places are indicated as having been submerged: first, Hartburn, seven miles from Kilham, "washed away by the sea;" Hyde, "lost by the sea;" the town of Hornsea Beck; Hornsea Burton; ancient Aldbrough; ancient Withernsea; and Frismarsh. He then indicates the precise distance of the various churches of note then standing from the sea, from which I have been able to estimate the

* Allen.

terrible perdition which this district has suffered within the space of a single century. Indeed, several of Tuke's churches, which he took as landmarks, are themselves buried far out amidst the breakers.

Perhaps the most important town, next to Ravenspur, which has perished in modern times hereabouts is Hornsea, a former bustling seaport. We read that Walter de Spiney, about the year 1228, gave to the convent of Meaux his "whole profit of merchandize and of every ship applying at the port of Hornsea for four days." The right of making this grant being disputed, it appeared that the profits collected on vessels lying north of Hornsea Beck belonged to the town and domain of Hornsea, and that those taken south of the river belonged to the lord paramount of Holderness. Hence the monastery never enjoyed the aforesaid emoluments.

From such authorities as these it is clear that vessels in number lay here with security, and as late as the reign of Elizabeth there was a pier at Hornsea, as is evinced by a petition of 1558. But whatever may have been the state of Hornsea formerly, the pier and harbour have long since yielded to the depredations of the sea. From an inquest held (7th James I.), it appears that the structure had cost £3000, a great sum in those days, and that not less than 2500 tons of timber would be sufficient to repair it. By a previous inquisition, relative to the encroachments of the sea, held at Hedon, 10th January, 1400, upon the oaths of twelve clergymen and

as many laymen, it was shown that in the year 1334 (which, it will be recalled, was just after King Baliol landed at Ravenspur) Meaux Abbey held in Hornsea Burton twenty-seven acres of arable land, let at two shillings per acre, of which, at the close of the century, not one remained.

The same story is repeated at various inquests concerning the waste of the manor by the sea's depredations in the course of the next two or three centuries. In 1609 an oath was made to this effect:—

"We find decayed, by the flowing of the sea, since 1546, thirty-eight houses, and as many closes adjoining. Also we find two churches since centuries far from the sea. These were known, from the similarity of their architecture and from a tradition which connected their founders with close kinship, as the Sister Churches."

Owthorne Church, standing like a solitary beacon on the verge of the cliff, perpetually undermined by the billows, and offering a powerless resistance to their encroachments, for some years presented a "touching and interesting spectacle." The churchyard and its slumbering inmates, removed from time to time down the cliff by the force of the tempest; whitened bones projecting from the cliff, and gradually drawn away by the successful lashing of the waves; and, after a fearful storm, old persons tottering on the verge of life, have been seen slowly moving forth, and recognizing on the shore the remains of those whom, in early life, they had known and revered.

The old church still remained; but in 1786 the sea began to waste the foundations of the churchyard. In 1796 the church was dismantled; and in 1816, after an awful storm of unusual violence, the waves having undermined the foundations, a large part of the eastern end of the church fell in with a fearful crash, and was washed down the cliff into the sea. Many coffins and bodies in various states of preservation were dislodged from their gloomy repositories, and strewn upon the shore in frightful disorder. Among the rest, one coffin in particular arrested the notice of the Rev. James Robson, the vicar, and another gentleman. It was believed to be that of a person of some distinction—probably the founder of the church. The remains, which had been covered and protected by a large stone in the chancel, had been embalmed with fragrant spices and aromatics, which, even after exposure to the air, had not lost their original odour. The body had been closely swathed in bandages of seared cloth, and afterwards folded in a thin sheet of lead, which itself was embroidered and painted. These relics of departed greatness found a new place of sepulture at Rimswell. In 1838 there was scarce a remnant of the churchyard left; and six years later the vicarage and other houses shared a common fate.

The modern tragedy of Owthorne points to the fate of old Withernsea.

"There can be little doubt," says Mr. Poulson, the historian of Holderness, "that the old township of Withernsea stood beyond that which is now the

cliff, and that the row of old enclosure called the Row Garths, were all that remained of the situation at the time of the enclosure."

And, indeed, this surmise we find to be correct. For, on the 8th November, 1444, a commission issued out to examine the parishioners of Withernsea, "whose churchyard being so nigh the sea, that by the violence of its waves beating upon it in a certain tempest, was destroyed," that they might make choice of another foundation, whereon to erect a new church.

In 12th Edward III. the inhabitants of the town of Withernsea petitioned the Crown for a market to be held within the town; and five years later, a market on Thursday in every week, and two fairs of four days' continuance, were granted to Withernsea. This shows it to have been a place of some importance.

Not least amongst the lost towns of Yorkshire was old Kilnsea, whose church lasted until well into the nineteenth century. The present Kilnsea is probably at least one, and perhaps two, miles from the ancient town.

In Domesday Book we read:—

"Chilnesse.—Morcar had thirteen carucates and a half of land to be taxed, where they may be 12 ploughs [other owners are enumerated, having] together 29 carucates of land."

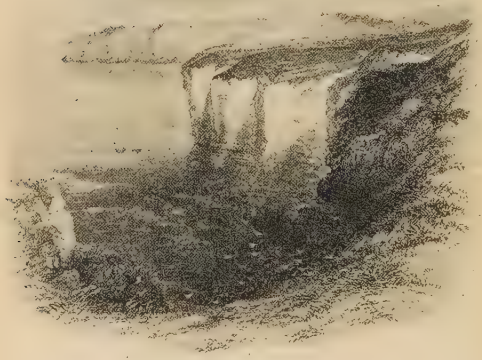
Thus the total was about forty-two and a half carucates, or 1275 acres of land, seven-tenths of which is now submerged.

As I have said, the great church formerly to the west of the town was the last building to disappear. Divine service was held in it until the year 1823, when the vicar was obliged to discontinue his labours, owing to the dangerous position of the church on the cliff. Three years later it was dismantled; and the huge and massive walls, built by faithful men, not for their own brief age only, as they fondly thought, but for all time, soon afterwards gave way to the merciless element that preyed upon them. The old grey tower of unknown strength, the mariner's landmark, was the last portion of the holy fane to fall, and so lies buried in the ocean, amidst the tempest's roar, the work of Norman hands.

The destructive effects of the wide waste of waters in the storms which periodically assail this coast has been accounted for by a reverend gentleman of the locality (the shrine of whose ancestors has, no doubt, been rudely invaded) on the supposition that the entire district of Holderness is the deposit of the Great Deluge. In the rapid flow of that mighty inundation, from north to south, he thinks vast accumulations of earth might have been left, mixed with quantities of detached rock, over which, either rounded or ground to dust by its force, it passed.

In such case it may be that these deposits, from the violent manner in which they were conveyed, came to present a very uneven surface, and in many places were heaped in hills considerably elevated above the level of the sea. The sea-waves, in spring tides, when

urged by violent winds, reach the base of these deposits, and, owing to the soft nature of the material, wash away and undermine them. Thus the uppermost strata, losing their rocky support, fall down and are carried away by the waters to more quiet situations. The gravel they contain is ground down until it becomes sand;



FLAMBOROUGH HEAD A CENTURY AGO.

and consequently the destruction of the cliffs is the cause of the bay formed by the line of the Holderness coast. Flamborough Head, its northern promontory, is preserved, owing to the hardness of its material; the southern extremity, Spurn Point, by its want of elevation. To some

such cause as this may, in brief, be attributed the difference of outline presented by the coasts of Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. For, generally speaking, unless some adverse influence of wind and tide exist, low land will form a much better barrier to the encroachments of the sea than elevated cliffs composed of soft and yielding substances.

Atwick suffers greatly from marine erosion. In 1840 the greatest portion of the village was situated at the junction of three roads, in the centre of which is the portion of an old cross, raised on three steps. This cross, which is said to have formerly been two miles from the sea, was in 1786 distant thirty-three chains and sixty-one links, and in 1830 was hardly half the distance.

The spring tides, in the month of December, 1839, having laid bare to a great extent the bed of the sea, the remains of a long-submerged forest became exposed to view, off Owthorne in Holderness. The trees of this forest, for centuries lapped by the waves, and amongst whose branches the fishes of the ocean had disported, were of various kinds; and even acorns, hazel and beech nuts, and the roots of reeds were uncovered. Adjoining these was visible the bed of a fresh-water lake with the shells of the river-mussel in plenty. The beach contained likewise the bones of various animals, one boy of the neighbourhood digging up a stag's horn, 10½ inches in circumference at the root, and in a wonderful state of preservation.

On the edge of this forest, now wholly

submerged by the ocean, lay the ancient town of Seathorne, or, as its successor came to be called, Owthorne. It is less than a century ago that two fair churches graced the village of Owthorne, that had stood there for the same time, decayed, in ground the breadth of twelve score yards throughout the fields of Hornsea, being a mile long, and parcel of the aforesaid manor. Edward Harrison, of Seaton, husbandman, aged eighty years, testified that he had known 300 yards washed away. Perhaps it was a descendant of this Harrison who, in November, 1757, measured various distances to the edge of the cliff, which table was continued by John Tuke, county surveyor, showing the loss to be close upon eight yards a year.

A tradition exists, and is quoted by various writers, that when the parish church of St. Nicholas was built, it was ten miles from the sea. The following inscription is said to have been formerly inscribed on the steeple :—

> "Hornsea steeple, when I built thee,
> Thou was 10 miles off Burlington,
> 10 miles off Beverley, and 10 miles off sea."

Allen positively states that Hornsea was "formerly thirteen or fourteen miles from the sea, but now is little more than a quarter of a mile."

Far out at sea mariners still point to a peculiarity of the breakers, which they call Pennel's Pool. This is the site of the cliffs where a notorious pirate and smuggler of that name was suspended for many months on a

gibbet. Pennel murdered his former captain, and sank the vessel near Hornsea. He was captured and tried in London, and the body sent down in a case marked "Glass."

"It was prepared," says Mr. Poulson, "for the revolting exhibition by being bound with iron hoops, and, in 1770, hung upon the north cliff, which, with its ornament, is now washed away."

A submarine forest off Hornsea is frequently alluded to by several old writers, and many specimens of the trees which formerly composed Hornsea wood have been picked up on the beach. In 1836 a pair of antlers were taken out immediately fronting the town.

Hornsea Burton has completely vanished, although giving its name in Poulson's time to a single farmhouse. In the time of the survey it was one of the five sokes of land belonging to the manor of Hornsea, and had under the plough two carucates of land. In the reign of Edward the Confessor it formed part of the extensive possessions of Morcar, Earl of Northumberland.

Hyde, or Hythe, was a prosperous town on this coast. In the reign of Edward III. it is known to have suffered from the depredations of the sea. The monkish writer of the "Chronicles of the Abbey of Meaux," in lamenting the losses the abbey had sustained, observes that they received nearly £30 from the town of Hythe, chiefly from the tithe of fish; "but now," says he (writing in 1396), "the place is totally destroyed"—a proof that it had

vanished into the sea before the beginning of the fifteenth century. The town must have been a source of great emolument to the abbey, inasmuch as £30 for tithe, even in the present day, on fish would be considerable. At the period referred to it would have been enormous. Withow, an adjoining hamlet, also disappeared at the same time.

The Priory of Burstall has been swept away by the frightful encroachments of the sea. From the numerous relics and fragments of other times washed upon the shore below Welwich, it is conjectured that must have been the site of a populous place. These relics are generally found embedded in a sort of black composition of earth and sand, thrown up after a storm. Numerous remains and Saxon coins, the remains of a brass fibula, an ancient buckle of brass, a large buckle of lead with the Lombardic A upon it (supposed to have been an abbott's), with many other vestiges of early days, are still preserved in local cabinets.

Of the places within the parish of Easington which have met a watery grave, the Liber Melsae* mentions Hotton, Northorpe, Dymitton, and Out Newton.

The wasteful action is very conspicuous at Dimlington Height, the loftiest point in Holderness, where the beacon stands on a cliff 146

* "Hiis diebus (1360) villa de Ravense odd in paroc' de Esington ex cojus Incoles et habitantibus maxime pars proventuum ipsius Ecclesiæ de Esington perveniue consueverit per fluctus Humbriæ et inundationes magne maris, totallitur adnullabatur."

feet above high water, chiefly composed of clay. For many years the rate at which the cliffs recede from Bridlington to Spurn, a distance of 36 miles, has been found by measurement to equal, on an average, 2½ yards annually, which, upon 36 miles of coast, would amount to 30 acres a year.* At this rate, this part of the coast, the mean height of which above the sea is about 40 feet, has lost one mile in breadth since the Norman Conquest.

"How long," observes Dade, "the sea has continued to make encroachments on this coast is a subject on which history and tradition are equally silent. Science of every kind being so universally diffused, we may hope that the period is not very remote which will enable the naturalist to investigate at large the causes and effects of these depredations."

From the inquiries this author himself made on this subject, he tells us that his own parish of Barmston is supposed to lose, one year with another, a yard and a half of land throughout the whole extent of the east part of the lordship.

"But," he adds, "I cannot but remark that the want of accurate observation (which a spirit of inquiry properly exerted might from time to time have happily supplied) prevents me from ascertaining this point with any degree of certainty. The annexed survey of each lordship on the coast will, I hope, assist future generations in investigating this matter with that accuracy and precision

* Phillips's "Geology of Yorkshire," p. 61.

which so curious and so interesting an article of natural history demands and deserves."

This pious hope has been, in a measure, fulfilled; and the present-day student of Lost England is enabled to profit by this painstaking survey.

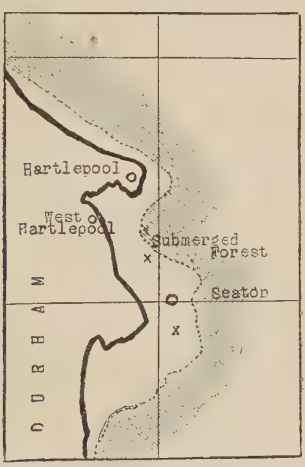
CHAPTER V

How proudly rose thy crested seat
Above the ocean wave,
Yet doomed beneath that sea to meet
One wide and sweeping grave.

SEATON, in Durham, formerly a populous town, has shrunk inland almost to vanishing point. In the sands at low tide may be seen traces of the old town, but not even a vestige remains of the ancient chapel of St. Thomas à Becket, the pride of the district. At Seaton Snook, two miles to the south, there are yet visible, or were a few years ago, the remains of fortifications built in 1667 at the mouth of the river. Between Seaton and Hartlepool the tourist readily finds tangible evidences of the great forest which now lies submerged on the coast.

In Lincolnshire the spectacle is presented throughout a number of centuries, even as far back as Romish times, of alternate loss and

conquest. But vast as the reclamations of land have been, it is impossible to doubt the geological evidence that our entries are still far heavier on the credit side of the ledger which registers our account with Father Neptune. It is true that less than three centuries ago many thousands of acres of fenland were covered by



LOST LAND IN DURHAM, SHOWING THE SITE OF SEATON.

the sea, and had been for several hundred years. But prior to that period Lincolnshire was overspread with huge forests, the relics of which may to-day be seen at Friskney, Wainfleet, and in the East Fen, in the shape of trees of oak and fir with their roots which lie buried in the soil.

The vicinity of Revesby was formerly a thick wood. In land recently reclaimed, the remains of a smith's shop have been exhumed, together with a number of horse-shoes, being tolerable proof that a village once rested on or near this spot. So that what we have gained since the seventeenth century in Lincolnshire from the sea is merely our own property filched from us since William the Conqueror's time. The overflowing of the fens probably took place between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.*

On the other hand, there has vanished a territory which we have not regained, and which is likely to be lost to us for ever. Skegness was, in the time of the Plantagenets (to go no farther back), a great and important town. It had its castle and its fortifications, and its stately spire. If one of our ancestors returned to visit the scene of his mortal haunts at Skegness, he would have to search among the foaming breakers of the coast for its site, and plunge several fathoms deep in a vain quest for castle, church, and market-place. The remains of a mighty forest is still visible along the entire coast from Skegness to Grimsby. At Addlethorpe and Mablethorpe, especially, the trunks of the trees can be plainly seen at low tide.

Although in modern times vast tracts in Lincolnshire have been reclaimed by the art of

* "It must not be imagined," remarks Sir Charles Lyell, "that the acquisition of new land fit for cultivation in Norfolk and Suffolk indicates any permanent growth of the eastern limits of our island to compensate its reiterated losses. No delta can form on such a shore."

the engineer and the industry of the inhabitants from the sea, yet much of this county was once to be placed in the category of Lost England, and even yet it is believed certain that many thousands of acres are still submerged. At any rate, the character of the land has undergone a remarkable change. It was once a vast forest, boasting of trees of great height and thickness. At some early period the waters of the sea overflowed the whole of the country between the Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire hills, and encompassed the Isle of Lindsey from the mouth of the Trent to that of the Witham. We are informed that the Romans on entering the country of the Coritani (A.D. 41), found it covered with much wood; and also that "one of the principal forests of ancient Britain was that of the Coritani." The quantity of trees, everywhere found upon digging through the upper stratum to the moory soil, is adduced as a proof of the former existence of this extensive forest. That the whole of Lincolnshire was once a well-wooded district there is really no reason to doubt. The stupendous works undertaken by the Romans reclaimed large tracts on the coast. By cutting the Cor. dyke, they prevented the waters from deluging the country, and their immense sea-banks shut out the tides, and thus drained the lands and rendered them fit for the purposes of agriculture. The country would now be adapted for the cultivation of timber, and it was, doubtless, at this time, planted in great profusion. In Mr. Edwards's "Survey of the Witham" (1769) is the following passage:—

"Bodiam Sands, near Bardney, lie about three feet and a half below the surface of the adjacent lands. They consist of a thin bed of sand upon a bed of strong blue clay . . . on which bed was found a large number of oak, yew, and alder roots and trees, which had grown thereon. The soil on each side is moory and full of subterranean wood, to three and a half feet thick. The oak roots stand upon the sand, and tap-root into the clay ; some of the trees are five feet in diameter at the bole, and more than ten feet from out to out at the root."

It was during the period which elapsed between the drainage of the country by the Romans and its relapsing into a fenny state again that the stratum of moor or peat would in part be formed, and which would arise from the usual processes of cultivation and the decay of vegetable matter. This moor stratum is usually about a foot thick ; upon and within it one found stags' horns, warlike instruments, and other remains of the ancient inhabitants. Upon its surface several canoes of a peculiar form of construction have been discovered. The principal part of this stratum would, however, be formed of the decayed vegetable matter left upon it, when, through the operation of causes hereafter to be detailed, the district was again overflowed by the waters, both of the uplands and the ocean. The trees which are most commonly found upon digging down to the peat stratum are oaks and firs. Some of the former, of very large size, have been discovered at Bardney, and amongst others, one which was 90 feet long and four feet square, and contained

1440 feet of solid timber. In Friskney, Wainfleet, and Wrangle, and in the East Fen, great numbers of fir trees, with their roots, have been discovered lying in the moory soil one foot below the surface in the low parts, and from two to six feet in the higher lands. These trees are not so large as others, but throughout the East Fen and in many parts of the West, particularly towards Revesby, both oak and fir trees have been found in such numbers as clearly to indicate that this tract was once a wood.

Again, at the laying of a new sluice at the fall of Hammond Beck into Boston haven, in taking up the foundation of the old gowt, they met with the roots of trees which, when removed with the surrounding black earth, disclosed a gravelly, stony soil, similar to that of the high country, and beyond question the surface of the lost country. At the laying of Skynbeck sluice, near Boston, there was found, sixteen feet deep, covered with silt, a smith's forge and "all the tools thereunto belonging," says Dugdale, "with horse-shoes and other things made of iron, as some that saw it have affirmed to me."

It is clear that the catastrophe which reduced "this well-wooded level to the state of a fen, or marsh," was of comparatively recent date. The smith's shop, the horse-shoes, and the "shoes with pointed toes," belong to what may be termed modern times. There can also be no doubt that the destruction of the country was occasioned by an irruption of the sea. The theory of Stukely and Dugdale deserves to be

mentioned. They opine that the event was the result of an earthquake which, by lowering the level of the land several feet, exposed it to the inroads of the sea. It is probable that this same cause has operated elsewhere on our coasts, to account for the sudden submersion of vast tracts by the sea. Dugdale's remarks cannot fail to be of interest :—

"That the vast level of the Fens was at first a firm, dry land, and not annoyed with any extraordinary inundation from the sea, I shall now endeavour to make manifest. . . . In Marshland, about a mile westwards from Magdalen Bridge, at the setting down of a sluice very lately, there was discovered at 17 feet deep, divers furze bushes, as also nut trees pressed flat down, with nuts sound and firm lying by them. . . . Granting, therefore, that this country, though lying flat and low, was not originally annoyed with the inundations of the ocean, I am now to demonstrate by what means it came to pass that the ocean broke into it with great violence, as that the woods then standing throughout the same became turned up by the roots ; and so great a portion of silt brought in as did cover the ground in an extraordinary depth, even to the remotest parts on the verge of the highlands. And as," he proceeds, "some places have been got from the sea, so some others have been lost, as may be seen by Skegness in Lincolnshire, which was heretofore a great haven town and walled, having a castle. But the old town is clean consumed and eaten up of the sea."

It is highly probable that the whole district in question was a mere bog or morass at the period of the foundation of St. Botolph's Monastery, Boston, A.D. 654. If, however,

Stukely's assertion be correct, that "Kirton in Holland was the original estate and seat of the first Saxon kings and earls of Mercia," it is evident that some attention would be paid to the advantage and condition of that town and its immediate neighbourhood. It was the opinion of the last-named authority that the kingdom of Mercia derived its name from a considerable part of it having been overflowed by the sea.

The first actual record we have of the sea's conquest is the irruption in 1178, when the country of Holland was deluged and destroyed. It appears from this that the district had at that time been recovered from the state it was in during the Saxon Heptarchy, and that the higher grounds were, previous to this inundation, in a state of profitable cultivation. For in 1154 Henry of Huntingdon says—

"This fennie countrie is passing rich and plenteous, yea and beautiful to behold, watered with many rivers running down to it, garnished with a number of meers, both great and small, which abound in fish and fowl; and it is firmly adorned with woods and islands."

It is obvious to any visitor to-day who views the submarine forest below Sutton and Huttoft that this part of Lincolnshire formerly extended farther into the ocean than at present. The sorts of timber which are yet distinguishable are birch, fir, and oak. De Serrea, who agrees with the theory that the overwhelming of this forest was due to an earthquake, observes that—

"it would be impossible for any of these trees or shrubs to vegetate so near the sea, and below the common level of its waters. The waves would cover such tracts of land and hinder vegetation."

This is certainly true, if the waves were not kept out. But supposing this land to have had the same formation as the rest of the district, it would evidently be gained from the sea by the method employed to reclaim the rest. Even though the soil were below high-water mark, still vegetation would take place upon it if it were protected from the inroads of the ocean. The trees growing there would be overwhelmed by the same catastrophe which overwhelmed the rest; but owing to the fact that silt or clay had not accumulated to assist in the work of reclamation, the whole of this land was given up to the ocean.

There is no means of ascertaining the extent of the country or of the number of towns and settlements which yet lie submerged in this country. Doubtless, Skegness is the principal town which has been lost. Leland says of it—

"Skegnesse was at sumtyme a great haven towne. The old Towne is clene consumed and eten up with the Se. Part of a chirche of it stode of late. For Old Skegnesse is now builded a poor new thing."

Holiday-makers in Norfolk do not need to be reminded of the continuous encroachment of the sea along the coast of that county. Wonder is excited in the bosom of a visitor to Cromer,

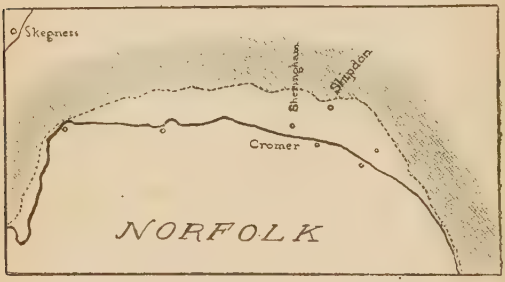
when some old salt, stretching a rough and tanned forefinger to the northward, indicates in the far distance a solitary upstanding rock, lashed by the waves, and says, "Yonder is old Cromer church, which used to be in the middle of the town. When there is a storm you can hear the bells chiming in the belfry."

This same legend is told of other parts of the coast—at Bognor, Bosham (in Sussex), and Bottreaux—where submerged bells ring on special occasions as a solemn omen.

It is in vain to explore the map of Norfolk for the once busy and famous town and seaport of Shipden, the spire of whose church, dedicated to St. Peter, was of such magnitude as to be visible on the opposite coast of Lincolnshire. Shipden, which, with its church and all its buildings, schools, and quays, was swallowed up by the sea in the reign of Henry IV., was situated 132 miles from London, and two miles north of Cromer, which was then a sort of suburb or dependent village, included in the lordship of Shipden, and not mentioned in Domesday Book. At very low tide, some years ago, were still to be seen large masses of wall, which sailors denominated the church rock. As a matter of fact, however, it is much more likely to have been the remnants of the wall of the castle of Shipden. It was from Shipden that Robert Bacon, the discoverer of Iceland, sailed; and it was this same Bacon who afterwards conveyed the Scottish prince, James Stuart, to France.

All about here the cliffs are lofty, and

continually being devoured by the sea. During the winter of 1799, the cliffs near the old lighthouse made several remarkably large slips, one of which brought with it at least half an acre of ground, and extended a considerable way into the sea at low water until it was swept away. Every year the sea makes powerful advances, and even land with farmhouses have fallen a prey to the enemy.



LOST LAND OFF THE COAST OF NORFOLK.

On the 15th January, 1825, a large mass of soil was detached from a part of the hills, near Cromer, called Lighthouse Hills, which at that place was 250 feet in height. It fell with mighty force on the beach, covering twelve acres, and was found to contain several fossil bones and other curious objects. A large and rapid stream of water, immediately after its fall, issued from the bank, discharging itself down on the beach with great noise and violence.

It is stated* that during the twenty-three years which elapsed between the Ordnance Survey of 1838 and the year 1861, a portion of the cliff, composed of sand and clay between Cromer and Mundesley, receded 330 feet, amounting to a mean annual waste of fourteen feet. The cliff at Happisburgh has wasted at the rate of about seven feet a year for sixty years preceding 1864.

Besides the town of Shipden, the ancient villages of Whimpwell, Overstrand, and Eccles have disappeared. Several manors and large portions of neighbouring parishes have, piece after piece, been swallowed up; nor has there been any intermission from time immemorial in the ravages of the sea, along the line of coast, twenty miles in length, on which these places stood. Of Eccles a monument remains in the ruined tower of the old church. As early as 1605, the inhabitants petitioned James I. for a reduction of taxes, as "300 acres of land and all their houses save fourteen, had been destroyed by the sea." Not half that number of acres to-day remains in the parish.

At Sheringham, Sir C. Lyell, ascertained, in 1829, some facts which throw light on the rate at which the sea gains upon the land thereabouts. It was computed, when the inn was built, in 1805, that it would require seventy years for the sea to reach the spot, the mean loss of land being calculated, from previous observations, to be somewhat less than a yard annually. The distance between the house and the sea

* J. B. Redman, C.E.

was fifty yards; but no allowance was made for the slope of the ground being *from* the sea, in consequence of which the waste was naturally accelerated every year, as the cliff grew lower, there being at each succeeding period less matter to remove when portions of equal size fell down. Between the years 1824 and 1829 no less than seventeen yards were swept away, and only a small garden was then left between the building and the sea. There was, in 1829, a depth of twenty feet (sufficient to float a frigate) at one point in Sheringham harbour, where, only forty-eight years before, there stood a cliff fifty feet high, with houses upon it! If once in half a century an equal amount of change were produced suddenly by the momentary shock of an earthquake, history would be filled with records of such wonderful revolutions of the earth's surface; but if the conversion of high land into deep sea be gradual, it excites only local attention. The flag-staff of the Preventive Service station, on the south side of this harbour, was twice removed inland between the years 1814 and 1829, in consequence of the advance of the sea.

It is pathetic to see churches—such as that at Sidestrand—hanging on the very edge of a precipice and all but in the maw of the ocean, which a century or two since were the centres of happy villages, all unconscious of doom, of which to-day not a trace remains but in the coffined bones and dust of the "rude forefathers of the hamlet"—dust which next year or the next will be scattered to the four winds of

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heaven by the tottering of the cliff. Readers of Mr. Watts-Dunton's romance of "Aylwin" may remember a very powerful and vivid picture of such a landslip on the Norfolk coast.

"My meditations," he says, "were interrupted by a sound, and then by a sensation such as I cannot describe. Whence came that shriek? It was like a shriek coming from a distance—loud there, faint here, and yet it seemed to come from me! It was as though I were witnessing some dreadful sight, unutterable and intolerable. . . . At my feet spread the great churchyard, with its hundreds of little green hillocks and white gravestones, sprinkled here and there with square box-like tombs. All quietly asleep in the moonlight! Here and there an aged headstone seemed to nod to its neighbour, as though muttering in its dreams. The old church, bathed in the radiance, seemed larger than it had ever done in daylight, and incomparably more grand and lovely.

"On the left were the tall poplar trees, rustling and whispering among themselves. Still there might be at the *back* of the church mischief working. I walked around thither. The ghostly shadows on the long grass might have been shadows thrown by the ruins of Tadmor, so quietly did they lie and dream. A weight was uplifted from my soul. A balm of sweet peace fell upon my heart. The noises I had heard had been imaginary, conjured up by love and fear; or they might have been an echo of distant thunder. The windows of the church, no doubt, looked ghastly, as I peeped in to see whether Wynne's lantern was moving about. But all was still. I lingered in the churchyard close by the spot where I had first seen the child Winifred and heard the Welsh song.

"I went to look at the sea from the cliff. Here, however, there was something sensational at last.

The spot where years ago I had sat when Winifred's song had struck upon my ear and awoke me to a new life—*was gone!* 'This, then, was the noise I heard,' I said; 'the rumbling was the falling of the earth; the shriek was the tearing down of trees.'

"Another slice, a slice weighing thousands of tons, had slipped since the afternoon from the churchyard on the sands below. 'Perhaps the tread of the townspeople who came to witness the funeral may have given the last shake to the soil,' I said.

"I stood and looked over the newly-made gap at the great hungry water. Considering the little wind, the swell on the North Sea was tremendous. Far away there had been a storm somewhere. The moon was laying a band of living light across the vast bosom of the sea, like a girdle."

CHAPTER VI

"Nor will they coldly turn away,
Because my verse shall tell
A story of the fearful day
When mighty Dunwich fell."
Strickland.

THE story of Dunwich, as the old chronicler of that city well says, "will afford Speculation sufficient to ruminate on the Viciffitude and Inftability of fublunary Things."

This important place, long submerged by the sea, was situated in the Hundred of Blything, in the county of Suffolk. The ruins of a solitary

church of large dimensions, toppling on the edge of the cliff, is the only existing memorial of the ancient city, "surrounded with a stone wall and brazen gates," which boasted fifty-two churches, chapels, religious houses, and hospitals; a king's palace, a bishop's seat, a mayor's mansion, and a mint; as many top-ships as churches, and not fewer windmills. Also a forest that extended from the town southward seven miles, now covered by the sea; and the port connected to firm land.

"These relations," wrote Thomas Gardner, in the middle of the eighteenth century, "excited my curiosity of visiting this place, where I beheld the Remains of the Rampart; some tokens of *Middle-gate;* the foundations of downfallen *Edifices* and tottering Fragments of Noble *Structures*, Remains of the *Dead* exposed, and naked wells divested of the Ground about them, by the Waves of the Sea! divers *Coins*, several *Mill-Hills*, and part of the *old Key*."*

* Here is further evidence dated a couple of centuries earlier: "Touchinge the State of the Toune in times past, it appeareth as well by their Charter, as otherwise, that it hath been one of the ancient Tounes in this Yland; that there hath benn a Bifhoppes Sea, alfo a Minte, and a Market everie Daie in the Week. And hath alfo (for their sondrie faithfull and espetial Services, as makinge out at fome one Time eleven strong and well furnished Shyppes for the defence of the Realme at their owne Costes and Charges, by the space of thirteen weakes and more, with Loss of 500 Men and 1000*l.* in Goodes, &c.), from Time to Time stood in high Favour with the Kinges of this Land, of whom they have received most large and liberal Graunts of Priviledges, Liberties, Cuftomes, &c., besides sundrie Letters from sutch Kinges, written to the Burgesses there."—Report of Radulph Agas to Queen Elizabeth, 1589.

THE LAST OF OLD DUNWICH, DESTROYED BY THE SEA.

By whom Dunwich was founded cannot be justly determined, but it is believed, from some of their coins being picked up, and by other signs, that it was a Roman station. When Suffolk became numbered among the conquests of the Saxons, the latter doubtless gave it its name, Dunwic, from "dun," a hill, and "wyc," a fort. It was then situated on a cliff about forty feet high. On the east and west of the town was a rampart raised of earth, fortified on the top with palisades, and at the foot with a deep ditch, part of which, with the bank, was a hundred and fifty years ago still to be seen terminating at the north end of Seafields, as it was called. On the north side was an ascent from the river, which rendered the access in some places rather dangerous, but in others less difficult. In order to frustrate, however, any attempts that way, several artificial mounds were cast upon the ridges, which were also fenced with palisades, and encompassed a spacious plot, we are told, "with hills and hollows, replenished with buildings fair and magnificent for grandeur, seconded by none in the county, populous and opulent, and of renown."

Although history has little to record of Dunwich and its happenings prior to the ascendancy to the throne of East Anglia of Sigbert, yet, by the mere circumstance of this town having the precedence of all others in the said kingdom, we may infer that it was in a flourishing condition long before that era. On an estimate being taken of all lands through the kingdom by Edward the Confessor, Edric de Saxfield held

Dunwich for one Manor. We gather also that there were then one hundred and twenty burgesses, and that Dunwich paid a tax of ten pounds.

Dunwich became the royal demesne about the beginning of the reign of Henry II., at which time (as William of Newbury records) it was a town of good note abounding with much riches and sundry kinds of merchandise. We are led to place the more confidence in this statement from the fact that the town then kept and supplied with all necessaries, military forces capable of withstanding the army of the Earl of Leicester with his Flemish army, when he came to besiege it. That nobleman, after a series of victories, in which he overran Norwich, sat down before Dunwich, with the intention of finally capturing it. But after reconnoitring the situation, strength, and difficult access of the town, he despaired of success, and either voluntarily, or by compulsion, beat a retreat into Leicestershire.* The remains of the baron's fortifications when they besieged Dunwich, were formerly visible at Westleton Heath.

In order to convey an idea of the comparative size of the place in those early days, it may be mentioned that Dunwich rendered £133 6*s.* 8*d.* aid to marry Maud, King Henry's daughter,

* "Soe at that time, in the raigne of King Henry II. Robert, Earl of Leister, which took pte with Henry, the sonne of King Henry II., came to the said town of Donwich to have taken it against the King. But when he came neere and beheld the strength thereof, it was terror and feare unto him to behold it; and soe retired both he and his people."—*British Museum MS.*

while Ipswich was charged but £53 6*s.* 8*d.* Again, in the reign of Richard I., Dunwich was fined 1060 marks, Oxford 15 marks, Ipswich 200 marks, and Yarmouth 200 marks, for the illicit practice of supplying the enemy with corn. This inequality may be taken as implying the relative size of the towns mentioned.

Dunwich warmly espoused the cause of King John, and fitted out several ships to oppose the French, who, with the disaffected barons and their associates, obliged that monarch to attempt the raising of large forces abroad. In return for their sympathy and support, John visited the town, and personally granted the townsmen their first charter, making Dunwich a free borough. In the tenth year of his reign, the king confirmed his former charter, added a guild of merchants, with as ample privileges as were enjoyed by any town in the kingdom. Moreover, to crown his favours, he honoured the Corporation (which, prior to that period, had been governed by port-reeves and bailiffs) with a mayor and four sheriffs, under date of A.D. 1216.

King Henry III., "for faithful services of the men of Dunwich," confirmed at a later period all his father's grants, and also bestowed upon the town a parcel of land for the purpose of building a house for the services of the Minor Friars, an order newly arrived in England.

In the reign of King Edward, Dunwich maintained, besides eleven ships of war, sixteen ordinary ships, twenty barques or vessels trading

to the North Seas, and twenty-four craft for home industry.*

Dunwich, in this reign, may be said to have been at the zenith of its glory and material prosperity. But even now the sea had marked the city for her own. This was not the first warning the townsmen had had of the fate that ultimately overtook them. As long before as the reign of the Conqueror, it had been shown in Domesday Book that of two carves of land taxed in the time of King Edward the Confessor, one had been eaten up by the sea, whose encroachments continued with the strong north-west winds or furious gales from the east. But little heed appears to have been paid to these warnings; church after church rose, each more beautiful and costly than its predecessor; the population increased; merchants came hither from all over East Anglia; many shops lined the chief streets, which were thronged by multitudes on feast-days and holy days, bishop and friar mingling with soldier, clerk, and artisan.

As long ago as the time of Sigebert, Dunwich

* "In the twenty-fourth year of his reign, the men of Dunwich, at their own proper costs and charges, built for the defence of the realm, eleven ships of war, well furnished with munition; most of them carrying seventy-two men each, the rest fifty-five, forty-five, and forty apiece. These sailed from the port of Plymouth, with the King's brother, Edmund, Earl of Leicester and Lancaster, and other true loyal subjects, for France; and remained on the coast of Grascoign from St. Andrew's Day until the feast of Pentecost next following, during which time they served the King without pay; and had four ships, with their artillery, etc., taken and destroyed by the enemy."—GARDNER.

had been made an Episcopal See. During this pious prince's banishment abroad he had made the acquaintance of Felix of Burgundy, a monk of virtue and strong character; and on Sigebert's accession to the throne, Felix became the King's spiritual adviser. Soon afterwards, in 636, Felix was consecrated the first bishop of East Anglia, by Honorius, Archbishop of Canterbury. The new prelate very naturally fixed his see at Dunwich, which at that time became a city where many famous men resorted to promote the work of Christianity. Moreover, schools and seminaries were here erected for the purposes of education, and many hundreds of youth flocked hither to avail themselves of the facilities they offered.

"At Dunmoc than was Felix first Bishop
Of Estangle, and taught the Christian faith;
That is full hye in Heven I hope."

After there had been four bishops at Dunwich for the whole of the great eastern counties of England, Norfolk and Suffolk were divided, the see of the latter remaining at Dunwich during the lifetime of eleven bishops, as follows:—

SUFFOLK.

Dunwich.

A.D. 673—1. Etta.
2. Astwolph.
3. Eadgerth.
4. Certhwin.
5. Albarth.
6. Eglag.
7. Heardred.
8. Aloin.
A.D. 787—9. Tidgerth.
10. Weremund.
11. Wibred.

The first church at Dunwich was built by Felix, the first bishop of East Anglia, in whose honour it was dedicated. Felix was buried in the church in the year 647. The second and third churches were dedicated to St. Leonard and St. John. This latter was a very large church, and stood for several centuries by the great market-place, in the very heart of the town.

About three and a half centuries ago,* the inhabitants of the parish, being apprehensive of the approaching destruction of this church by the sea, in order to save the materials from falling over the cliff, which was then washed by the waves, almost to the walls, took it down. In the chancel they found a large gravestone, which, on being raised, revealed a stone coffin. Inside lay the corpse of a man, which, upon being exposed to the air, crumbled to dust. Upon the legs of the corpse were a pair of boots "picked like crakows," and on his breast were two chalices of coarse metal. Such were the remains of one of the former bishops of Dunwich.†

* A.D. 1540.

† Weever, the Funereal chronicler, 1631, thus tells the story in his usual quaint fashion: "And, further, you shall understand that, when St. John's church was taken down, there lay a very plain faire gravestone in the chancel, and when it was raised and taken up, next under the same gravestone was a hollow stone, hollowed after the fashion of a man, for a man to lye in; and therein a man lying with a pair of bootes upon his legges, the forepart of the feet of them peicked, after a strange fashion, and a pair of chalices of coarse metal lying upon his breast, the which was thought to be one of the Bishops

The chief street of Dunwich was St. James's Street, which was the thoroughfare where most of the shops were situated. It ran from east to west, at the latter extremity embouching upon Dering's bridge, which crossed Dunwich river. But another important street was King's Street, and Duck Street also had many shops and pedestrians. King's Road formerly led to Bury St. Edmund's, being commonly known as King John's Road, once out of the town, and is often mentioned in old deeds of lands bordering thereon.

In the early history of the town there grew a wood called East Wood or the King's Forest, extending several miles south-east of Dunwich; and Gardner avers that he has seen some documents in which the Conqueror gave permission to the Rouses, of Baddingham in Suffolk, to hunt and hawk in his forest at Dunwich. In the year 1739, the fury of the storm uncovered the roots of a great number of trees once growing on the distant beach, and so exhibited to the inhabitants the last remnants of East Wood.

On the north side of the town was the entrance into the haven, which was very commodious to the inhabitants for the transportation of goods and merchandise, thereby rendering Dunwich a mercantile town of great traffic, and the emporium of this part of the kingdom. For the safeguard of the harbour, a pier was erected on its north side. Part of the quay was plainly visible a

of Donwiche, but when they touched and stirred the same dead body it fell and went all to powder and dust."—*Ancient Funeral Monuments*.

hundred and fifty years ago, the piles being then still standing, exposed at low water. It was said, in 1754, that, at the spring tides, "upwards of two hundred shew their heads." On the south side of Dunwich harbour, the haven was large and deep, running by Walberswick, Southwold, and Blythborough. It was constantly filled with vessels of all sizes, not only from English ports, but from abroad, French and Dutch barques being well represented.

The great local event in Dunwich was St. Leonard's Fair, which was held in St. Leonard's parish on the fifth, sixth, and seventh days of November in each year. It brought together a vast concourse of visitors from all parts of East Anglia, and these, with the soldiers and sailors from the ships, must have presented a scene of great and picturesque animation, especially when to their numbers must be added the strolling minstrels and the mendicant friars, to whom a great fair offered manifold attractions in the shape of the reward they must surely reap.

St. James's Fair was annually kept in the street bearing that saint's name, on his festival and the day following, and was always a town holiday.

In the height of Dunwich's prosperity, the markets supplied the town daily.

Nor must be omitted mention of the Dunwich Mint, where much metal was coined, particularly those coins known as Dunwich half-pence.

Among the more important features of old Dunwich was the Temple. My readers will hardly need to be reminded that, after Saladin

had wrested the kingdom of Jerusalem from the Christians, in the twelfth century, the Order of Knights Templars dispersed itself throughout Christendom, becoming very powerful and wealthy. The order, by the liberality and bounty of all classes amongst the people, whose imagination was kindled by the cardinal object of the Crusaders, amassed great riches, which, by making its members proud and vicious, ultimately brought about its undoing. Not least among the many rich convents and manors which were possessed by the Templars was that at Dunwich. The Temple itself stood in the southerly part of the town, in a district long lapped by the waves.* It is reputed to have been a place of great privilege for pardons, and endowed with divers rents, tenements, houses, and lands, with other profits and commodities, both free and copyhold, in Dunwich and suburbs. Within its confines was a court called Dunwich Temple Court, held annually on All Saints' Day, the 2nd of November, for the purpose of gathering and collecting its revenues. When the catastrophe came, and Edward II., following the example of Philip the Fair, King of France, ordered his sheriffs to arrest all the Templars in the kingdom upon the Feast of the Epiphany, 1308, a scene of great commotion might have been witnessed in the good old city of Dunwich. From its harbour many of the town's early gentry had set off for the Crusades,

* It stood near Middlegate Street, having Duck Street on the north, and Convent Garden on the south, distant from All Saints about fifty-five rods.

and the town itself, warmly cherishing the tradition of those stirring times, could not fail to associate the Templars, then sunk in shameless lethargy, with the heroes of the conflicts with the proud Paynim. But it soon became clear that King Edward was resolved on abolishing the order, only, instead of seizing their possessions outright and burning the members, as the French monarch had not scrupled to do, he turned their property over to a new order, long known as the Knights Hospitallers.*

The Hospitallers long had an excellent estate at Dunwich, and probably kept the church, dedicated to the Virgin Mary and St. John Baptist (as other lords often did), for the use of their own tenants, whose houses, by the way, all bore crosses, the badges of the knights. On the suppression of the order, in its turn, by Henry VIII., for its temerity in adhering to the Bishop of Rome, their lands and goods at Dunwich reverted to the Crown,† and, although Queen Mary restored the order for a time, it was finally abolished under Elizabeth.

There were two priories (or friaries) in

* By the 17 Edw. II. it was enacted that neither the King nor the Lords should have by escheats, the lands that were the Templars (which order was then dissolved), but that the lands should remain to the Prior and brethren of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, which was then created for the defence of Christendom.

† In Blomefield's Collection (Edw. VI.) I find the following: "A Messuage in Donwych, with Ortyard, Gardens and all other th' Appurtenance, late *John Bull*, deceased, holden of the Manor of the Temple in Donwyche and parcell of the possession of St. Johns."

Dunwich, belonging respectively to the Orders of the Grey Friars and the Black Friars. With regard to the former, the corporation seems to have given the monks a parcel of land for their priory, as is partly evinced by the interruption of the town's rampart by the building of the east wall of the edifice. The priory comprised about seven acres of land, surrounded by a lofty stone wall, according to custom. It had three gates, one of which faced eastward, and the others to the west. The arches were finely constructed, not, we are told, without some curiosity of workmanship, and were clad, together with most of the wall, with ivy. The larger gate served as an entrance to the house, which, standing at some distance from the sea, ultimately came to serve, in the town's decline, as a hall where the business of the corporation was transacted, and also as a gaol. As for the smallest of the three gates, it was the common ingress for people into the Priory church.*

As for the Order of Dominicans or Black

* Here, among others, the following persons, says Weever, were interred :—

Sir Robert Valence.
The Heart of Dame Hawise Poynings (a rich patroness).
Dame Iden of Ilkerishall.
Sir Peter Mellis and Anne his wife.
Dame Dunne his mother.
John Fraucans and Margaret his wife.
Dame Bert of Furnival.
Austin of Cales.
John Falleys and Beatrix his wife.
Sir Hubert Dernford.
Peter Codun.
Robert Jentylman.
Dame Matylda Moryeff.

Friars, the priory here was founded by Sir Roger de Holish, Knight, who was buried therein, together with many other knights and ladies, "whose bones, with the church and edifice thereto appertaining, now lie under the insulting waves of the sea."

Grey Friars was formerly surrounded by a stone wall, and had several gates. It was a very ancient priory, being established soon after the inception of the Order of St. Dominic, early in the thirteenth century. In 1259 we read of a great dispute which arose amongst the order at Dunwich and Norwich concerning the bounds of the jurisdiction of their convents, as to preaching, gifts, etc. The dispute was eventually referred to William of Nottingham, then divinity reader of their order, at the convocation at Gloucester, who fixed the boundary of their convents by the county rivers, only the Friars at Dunwich were to have all Mendham and Rushworth, on both sides of the river, both as to spirituals and temporals. Besides these two priories, another convent or religious house existed, as is attested by ancient records and the presence of Convent Garden two or three centuries ago, but I have not been able to ascertain of what denomination it was or of the cell of monks which was situate at Dunwich. The latter seems to have been subordinate to the monastery at Eye.*

* "As the sea made encroachments thereupon many human bones were discovered, whereby part thereof manifestly appeared to have been a place of sepulture, which was washed away in the winter A.D. 1740." —GARDNER, 1754.

In addition to the many churches and priories at Dunwich, there were several large hospitals, such as the Maison Dieu and St. James' Hospital, the latter chiefly devoted to lepers, and founded as early as the reign of Richard I., by John, Earl Moreton, afterwards King of England. Attached to the institution was a large church and considerable revenue. The church, which lasted for centuries, was of curious architecture, not unlike the ancient form of the Eastern churches. These primitive structures, we know, were commonly divided into three parts, as the Sanctuary, Temple, and Ante-temple. In this church the altar part was an apsis, distinguished from the chancel by a spacious arch, and the chancel was separated from the nave by an arch of like workmanship. A separate chapel for the lepers stood on the north side. Maison Dieu, a hospital dedicated to the Holy Trinity, was also of very early foundation, for we find it in the reign of Henry III. mentioned as being served by a master and six brethren, besides a company of sisters. It seems to have been an establishment enjoying great privileges and honoured with masters of considerable social status in the realm.

Dunwich continued to send two members to Parliament from the reign of Edward I. down to the passage of the Reform Bill in 1832. One of these, in Elizabeth's reign, was John Suckling, secretary to the Lord High Treasurer, while at a later period, in Parliaments of 1710, 1713, and to 1749, the member was Sir George

Downing, who gave his name to Downing Street, Whitehall.

So Dunwich grew and flourished, with its priests and Knights Hospitallers, its military and sailors, its clerks and merchants, and, although not without warning, when the first of a series of great blows fell upon the town at the hands of Father Neptune, it found Dunwich unprepared. This consisted in the choking up of the harbour on the 14th of January, 1328, at the conclusion of a mighty storm.*

In a short time after, owing to the pressure of so great a body of water pent up by the blockade of the estuary, a new harbour was formed, which was likewise destroyed about the beginning of the reign of Henry IV. The corporation, realizing the gravity of the occasion, set to work and cut another haven, which lasted until 1464. When this bank was washed away, the mouth of Dunwich river often altered. A fourth entrance, called Hummerton's Cut was undertaken, but the bank, long known as Passely Sands, which formed there, caused the wreck of many ships, and was soon rendered unserviceable. When, in 1589, it was resolved to construct a new port, a dispute arose between the Dunwich corporation and the other towns on the coast. The former were for having the old port reconstructed, while the inhabitants of Southwold and

* "It lost in the tyme of King Edward the Third, by the King's warres in France, in the same service, the most parte of theire shipping, with the loss of 500 men of the same towne, which was slayne in the said warres." —*British Museum MS.* 1590.

Walberswick desired a new haven near the former town. The matter came to a head by the Southwold and other townsmen taking the business into their own hands and forcibly cutting a port, a proceeding which occasioned a law suit of ten years' standing, and resulted in a grievous loss to Dunwich, which was now, and so continued, destitute of means to secure a mouth to the haven.

When the Houses of York and Lancaster were in competition for the diadem, Dunwich, preferring the white rose to the red, slighted King Henry, and lent its aid to Edward IV., who acknowledged the peculiar services done him by the burgesses by conferring many favours upon them. For these reasons it is not unlikely that Henry VII. alienated his affections from Dunwich, and led him to grant a charter of incorporation to its rival, Southwold.

But in the mean time the glory of Dunwich was gone. The sea had not restricted itself to the harbour, but had attacked the very citadel and forefront of the city. By 1349 a huge slice of Dunwich, comprising upwards of four hundred houses, held in fee by the Crown, with many shops and wind-mills, were utterly devoured. Thereafter, hardly a year, certainly not a decade, passed without the ocean demanding and receiving his tribute. The ancient church of St. Felix and its cell of monks, and the churches of St. Leonard, St. Martin, and St. Nicholas, were devoured. By 1385 the "sea eat away the shore near to the Black Friars," and in the following century a church disappeared

every ten years into the sea. By 1540, with the demolition of the parish of St. Peter's,* not a quarter of the old city of Dunwich was left standing.

In 1608 the high road to the sea was consumed. In the reign of Charles I. the foundation of the Temple and adjacent buildings "yielded to the irresistible force of the undermining surges."

In 1677 the frightened inhabitants of the doomed city arose from their beds and beheld the jaws of the sea snapping in the market-place; and three years later all the buildings north of the Maison Dieu Lane were demolished. Here is a characteristic entry of the time:—

"1702.—The sea extended its dominion to St. Peter's Church, which was obliged to be broken down."

A year or two later the Town Hall suffered the same fate, the gaol was undermined, and in 1729 the utmost bounds of St. Peter's cemetery "gave place to the insulting waves."

Indeed, by this time the inhabitants had passed the limits of despair. Many of them had gathered on the walls and roofs of their houses, or stood on the cliffs, and stretching out their clenched fists, had loudly cursed the sea. But several generations of these had been buried, and their bones might now be seen strewn at low tide on the beach.

* "John Daye, the printer of the works of Archbishop Parker, bishops Latimer and Fox, the historian of Martyrs, was a native of St. Peter's, Dunwich, where he first saw the light, sometime about the year 1518."—WAKE.

FORMER COAST LINE OF SUFFOLK, INDICATING THE LOST LAND.

It needed but little more to complete the destruction of the town, and that little was forthcoming with a vengeance. In December, 1739–40, the wind, blowing very hard about the north-east, with a continuance for several days, occasioned great seas, which broke away mighty parcels of the cliff, and overflowed the land. Then disappeared the last remnants of St. Nicholas churchyard, and the great road theretofore leading into the town from the quay. From the ancient Maison Dieu onwards was one scene of destruction. With such fury did the sea rage that the Cock and Hen Hills, which, during the preceding summer, were upwards of forty feet high, were levelled to the surrounding country, or almost to the waters' edge. The cemetery of St. Francis was thus carried out to sea, and the

"secret repositories of the dead were exposed to view; several skeletons on the Ouze, divested of their coverings, some lying in pretty good order, others interrupted and scattered, as the surges carried them. Also a stone coffin, wherein were human bones covered with tiles."

So wrote an eye-witness of the scene. Old Dunwich had been swallowed up by the sea.

"The stately city greets no more
The home-returning bark;
Sad relics of her splendour o'er,
One crumbling spire we mark."

True it is to-day that "all her stately halls and towers" are "reflected on the tide." This once

famous city, of large extent, the buildings fair and many, well peopled and wealthy; abounding with various merchandise, and the source of literature in these parts of the kingdom, is reduced to one or two tottering ruins, a few modern cottages, and a handful of villagers.

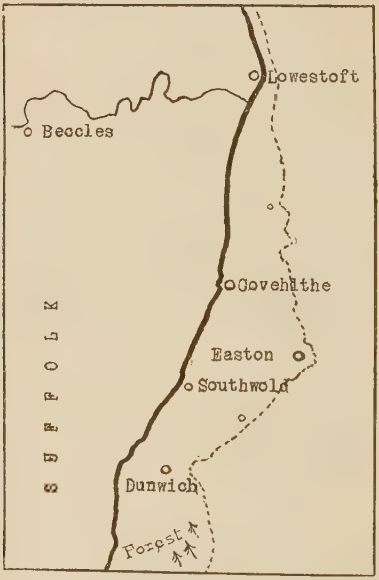
"The visitor," wrote a citizen of Southwold, a century ago, "will be prepared to find sea-sands where there was pasturage, sea-marshes where there were forests, boat-beds where there had been streets of merchandise, and loneliness in the place of multitudes. But an inferior kind of disappointment, not to be relieved by association of long-continued glory and the regal honours of East Anglian princes, is that of finding not even a fishing hamlet where it ought reasonably have been looked for."

Imagination may, indeed, busy itself to compensate for long-lost realities in sketching records of the illustrious dead: the pious labours of lords, abbots, and bishops, the romantic achievements of knights templars; even the self-denials and penances of authorities; the opulence and commerce of the brazen-gated city; and the palaces and sepulchres of her nobles and prelates.

I have devoted so much space to Dunwich that what I shall have to say of the other lost towns in the vicinity will partake, it is to be feared, of the character of repetition. As to chronology, the matter is simplified by the knowledge that the same storms and gales which marshalled the forces of the ocean in their onslaught upon Dunwich were also responsible for the destruction of the ancient towns of

Aldeborough, Easton Bavent, and Northales or Covehithe.

By way of compensation, many thousand acres were reclaimed between Beccles and the



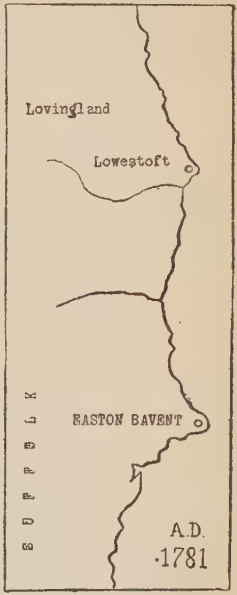
LOST LAND IN SUFFOLK, SHOWING SITE OF DUNWICH.

German Ocean. Beccles was a seaport, less than a mile distant from the coast; it is now several miles inland. But the date of this reclamation is believed to be anterior to the loss of Dunwich and Easton. The valleys of the

Waveney and the Little Ouse were once navigable for their entire course from Gorleston to Lynn, as a proof of which anchors and other traces of ancient navigation have been found in the bed of the river. Again, too, Eye in the tenth century was, according to Abbo Florianensis, situated in the middle of a marsh.

So greatly has the sea encroached at Aldeborough that it is on record that the town was once situated a half a mile at least beyond its present marine boundary.

The 16th of May, 1895, marked a fresh disaster for Southwold and Covehithe. On that date the gales, tides, and rough sea cut away so much land as to create a new cove on the northern boundary of the former town, already a victim for many decades to the ocean's ravages. Easton Bavent was once the most easterly land in England, and still appears so in the older school atlases. It has now retired inland two miles, and yields the palm of such



OLD CHART, SHOWING EASTON BAVENT AS THE MOST EASTERLY LAND IN ENGLAND.

distinction to Lowestoft. Covehitheness has also gone back two miles. Southwold has lost one mile. The coast-line no longer shows a bold promontory at Covehithe and Easton; the last Ordnance map exhibits almost a straight line. "Sole Bay," where the great naval battle was fought, remains on the map, but it has no existence in fact. Prior to 1895, Covehithe lost in six years 84ft., by actual measurement of a resident, figures which are much below the average rate of erosion elsewhere on the coast.

The ancient town and seaport of Orwell in Essex stood on the south side of Orwell harbour, upon a neck of land running out from the coast. The side is now marked by the West Rocks.

Upon the decay of Orwell, Harwich began to flourish and grow populous. But since then the sea has swept away a great part of the land belonging to the town, there being nothing, since Orwell is gone, to break the violence of the sea when the wind is in the east.

The washing and undermining of the tides have made this point a peninsula, and it is apprehended, in the course of a few years, will make it quite an island.

Walton derives its name from the wall which was anciently constructed to keep out the waves. The town extended considerably further east than it does now, "but hath been devoured by the sea."

The demolition of land by the sea hereabouts has given rise to a situation whose humour has become almost classical. For here was formerly the endowment of one of the prebends of St.

Paul's; but the sea having devoured it, the office or gift came to be styled *Præbenda consumpta per mare*. It long possessed the thirteenth stall on the left side of the chair.

Another instance of the same sort is that of the purchase of a farm in Walton parish by the

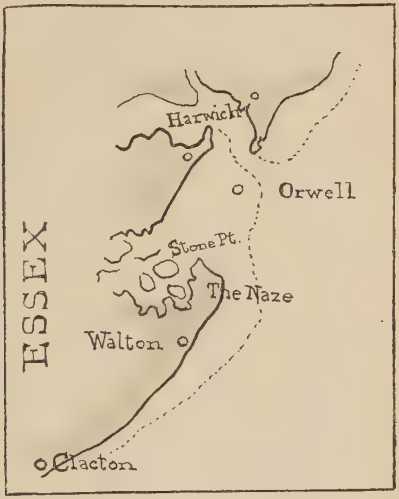


CHART OF LOST ESSEX.

Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty in 1739, for the augmentation of Holy Trinity rectory, Chichester. It continued to decrease in size, much, we suppose, to the discomfiture of the rector.

Walton-on the-Naze and Harwich are not the only places hereabouts on the coast which

have suffered. For instance, at Clacton-on-Sea, the cliffs are crumbling away in every direction, and the householders along the front are actually in dread of the approaching moment when their dwellings will be undermined by the waves. The demolition of the sea defences during the great flood a few years ago, involving the ruin of hundreds of acres of land in the Dengie Hundred, is another instance of the damage wrought by the ocean in this county.

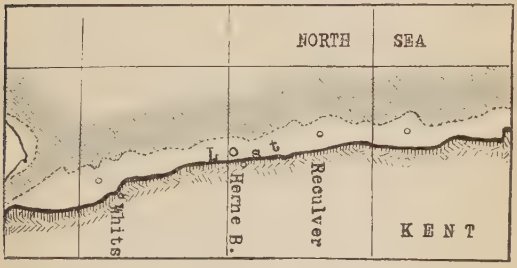
"Apprehensions have been entertained," observes Lyell, "that the isthmus on which Harwich stands may, at no remote period, become an island, for the sea may be expected to make a breach near Lower Dovercourt, where Beacon Cliff is composed of horizontal beds of Soudan clay containing septaria. It had wasted away considerably between the years 1829 and 1838, at both of which periods I examined this coast. In that short interval several gardens and many houses had been swept into the sea, and in April, 1838, a whole street was threatened with destruction."

Captain Washington, R.N., in his observations of Beacon Cliff in 1847, asserted that that Essex promontory had given way at the rate of forty feet in forty-seven years, between 1709 and 1756; eighty feet between 1756 and 1804; and 350 feet between the latter period and 1841.

CHAPTER VII

"And thou, Regulbrium, though less known to fame,
Yet in thy day the seat of Roman arms
And Saxon royalty . . . naught remains of thee ;
And the next age shall seek thy site in vain,
O'erthrown and sunk beneath the whelming wave."

THERE are few parts of the English coast so altered within the memory of living men as that bordering upon Kent. From Folkestone to Sussex verge the victory lies mainly with the land, for the sea has retreated, leaving such towns as Lymne, Romney, Hythe, Richborough,



LOST LAND IN KENT.

Stonor, Sandwich, and Sarre—formerly seaports —high and dry, or at least surrounded by the district known as the Marsh. Thanet, once an island like Graine, is no longer so. Swale is only a narrow channel, a fragment of its former

width. On the other hand, the sea has made serious inroads along the coast at Reculver, Herne Bay, and Whitstable.

The thousands of travellers by water daily passing into or out of the estuary of the Thames see on the Kentish coast two spires of a dismantled church situated upon the edge of a picturesque cliff. They are told that these twin spires are "the Reculvers," long familiar to mariners hereabouts as a landmark, and perhaps also that they approximate the site of the ancient town of Reculver.

And, indeed, on the shores of this spot, where the distant sea-swell comes surging in, marshalled perchance by a troop of snowy gulls, lies buried the Roman Regulbrium, and the Saxon, Norman, and English Reculver. Here was a flourishing castrum, guarded by hundreds of Roman soldiers, with a mint for the coinage of gold and silver. Here the Emperor Severus built his castle,* which, nearly four hundred years afterwards, Ethelbert, the fifth king of Kent, and his successors, made their palace. Two centuries later, Eodbert, another Kentish king, erected here a college, which he dedicated to the Virgin Mary. At Reculver, then two miles from the sea, Egbert (A.D. 792) built a Benedictine monastery.

It was to his palace at Reculver that King

* That Reculver was not only a military station, but also a large and populous town in Roman times, is to be inferred from the many existing vaults and foundations of buildings which have at various times been exposed to-day by the fall of the cliff.

PLAN OF THE TOWN OF RECULVER, KENT.

Ethelbert* had retired, and here he and his successor, Ethelbert II., died and were buried. A fair was anciently held here on St. Giles' Day, September 1, which became noted throughout all this part of Kent, and Robert Kilwarby, Archbishop of Canterbury in 1279, induced King Edward I. to grant the privilege of a weekly market in the town.

Reculver, even in Leland's time, was nearly half a mile from the seashore.

"The great antiquity of this place," says Duncombe, "is apparent from the vast number of Roman coins (chiefly of the lower Empire), medals, vases, etc., that have been, and continue to be, found here, for Reculver no doubt was one of the five Roman watch-towers or forts, as Richborough Castle was another, each of them commanding one of the mouths of the river Genlade or Wantsume, which, as Bede says, then divided the Isle of Thanet from the Continent of Kent. This castle, which guarded the north mouth, was the Roman station of the Vestasii, and was certainly on the hill where now stands the church, and where formerly stood the monastery."

That is to say, the castle, and subsequently the royal palace, overlooked the town to the north. The consular denarii and the coins of all the

* "In the latter part of the sixth century, Augustin, the monk, landed in Kent, and, by his preaching and example, quickly converted its King to the Christian faith. To accommodate the apostle and his followers, Ethelbert resigned to them his residence at Canterbury, and retired himself to Reculver, where, having built a palace within the area of the Roman walls, he resided until his death."—FREEMAN.

Roman Emperors, from Julius to Honorarius, and sharp, fine, new-coined medals of Tiberius and Nero, which have been found hereabouts in great numbers, prove that the Romans had not only an early settlement here, but that they long continued it.

"The Roman town," says an eighteenth-century writer, "has long been covered by the sea, which, last winter (1783) threw down the remains of the north side of the old Roman wall, which surrounded the castle, and makes such rapid inroads on the cliff that it is apprehended that the church will, in a few years, share the fate of the town."

The castle here, it may be added, when entire, occupied eight acres—the area within the walls measuring 7 acres 2 roods 26 poles.

The gradual progress of the sea is shown by a survey made in 1685, of which a facsimile is here given. About a century later, when Mr. Boys published his plan of the church and castle, the north wall of the latter had recently been overthrown by a fall of the cliff. Mr. Freeman states in 1805 the churchyard was entire, surrounded with its walls, and between the church wall and the cliff was a highway broad enough to admit of carriages.

"In 1809," he adds, "the distance from the north angle of the tower to the edge of the cliff, is reduced to five yards only."

Leland, in his "Itinerary," says—

"The towne, at this tyme, is but village like. Somtyme where as the parish church is now, was a fayre and a greate abbaye, and Brightwold, Archbishop of Cant. was of that howse."

All about this coast there are, as Lyell pointed out, numerous examples both of the gain and loss of land. The isle of Sheppey is now about six miles long by four in breadth. The cliffs on the north, which rear themselves as high as 200 feet, are destroyed at a rapid rate, fifty acres having been lost in twenty years, between 1810 and 1830. A forcible illustration of the loss is presented when we find that the church at Minster, now near the coast, was in the middle of the island in 1780. Truly has it been said that if the present rate of destruction should continue, the period at which the whole island shall have been annihilated might be easily calculated, and would not be very remote.

Although Herne Bay yet retains the name of a bay, the name can be considered no longer appropriate, as the waves and currents have swept away the ancient headlands. Formerly there was a small promontory in the line of the shoals where the present pier is constructed, by which the larger bay was divided into two, called the Upper and Lower.

When we turn our attention to the Isle of Thanet, we find that Bedlam Farm, formerly in the possession of Bethlehem hospital, lost eight acres in the twenty years preceding 1830, the land being composed of chalk from forty to fifty feet above the level of the sea. It has been reckoned, by an eminent geologist, that the average wash of the cliff between the North Foreland and the Reculvers, a distance of about eleven miles, is not under two feet per annum, giving a total annual loss of 92,000 feet. The

chalk cliffs on the south of Thanet, between Ramsgate and Pegwell Bay, has, says the same authority, on an average lost three feet per annum.

The lofty eminence at Dover, known as Shakespeare's Cliff, composed entirely of chalk, has been a great victim of the ocean, and continually diminishes in height, owing to the slope of the hill being landward. There was, we read, an immense landslip from this cliff in 1810, when Dover was shaken as if by an earthquake, and a still greater subsidence in 1772. It is, therefore, not unlikely that in the time of Shakespeare the summit which he describes in *King Lear* was of a mightier altitude, and much more "fearful and dizzy" than it seems to the modern visitor. Not only the cliffs, but the site of the town of Dover has altered, if we may believe the antiquaries, for the harbour was in former times an estuary, the sea flowing up a valley between the chalk hills.*

Was England formerly united to the Continent? To this question geology returns no certain answer. As early as 1605, Verstegan, the author of the "Antiquities of the English Nation," observing that many preceding writers had maintained this opinion, but without supporting it by any weighty reasons, proceeds to confirm it by various arguments. He shows, first the proximity and identity of the composition

* The remains found in different excavations confirm the description of a spot given by Cæsar and Antoninus, and there is clear historical evidence to prove that at an early period there was no shingle at all at Dover.

of the opposite cliffs and shores of Albion and Gallia, which, whether flat and sandy or steep and chalky, correspond exactly with each other. Again, there is the occurrence of a submarine ridge, called "Our Lady's Sand," extending from shore to shore at no great depth, and which from its composition appears to be the original basis of the isthmus. We are also called upon to note the identity of the wild animals in France and England, which could neither have swum across nor have been introduced by man. Thus no one, says one author, would have imported wolves, therefore these wicked beasts did of themselves pass over. Verstegan supposes the ancient isthmus to have been about six English miles in breadth, composed entirely of chalk and flint, and in some places of no great height above the sea-level. The operations of the waves and tides would have been more powerful when the straits were narrower, and even now, as we have seen, they are destroying cliffs composed of similar materials. The possible co-operation of earthquakes has been suggested, and Mr. R. A. Peacock has written a volume on the theory of the subsidence of vast tracts in the vicinity. Lyell himself remarks that when we consider how many submarine forests skirt the southern and eastern shores of England, and that there are raised beaches at many points above the sea-level containing fossil shells of recent species, it is reasonable to suppose that such upward and downward movements, taking place perhaps as slowly as those now in progress in Sweden and

Greenland, may have greatly assisted the denuding force of the ocean stream: Ποταμιο μεγα σθενος Ωκεανοιο.

Like many other—like, indeed, most other towns on the south coast—Folkestone formerly occupied a site very different from the present one. It was a place of note in the time of the Romans, who built a strong castle here, as did King Eadbald and William of Avranches, the lord of the manor at a later period, "on a high cliff, close to the sea-shore." But at length by degrees each was wholly destroyed, with the cliff on which it stood, by the encroachments of the sea, and if the site of the first-named to-day be sought, it must be more than half a mile beyond the end of the Folkestone pier. Leland, writing in Henry VIII.'s time, has this to say—

"The Towne shore be al lyklihod is mervelusly wasted with the violens of the se; yn so much that there they fay one Paroche chyrch of our Lady, and a nother of St. Paule is clene destroy'd and etin by the se."

At Folkestone, it was said in 1716, that within the memory of persons then living the cliff had been washed away to the extent of ten rods. In that same year there was a remarkable subsidence caused by marine erosion, "so that houses became visible from certain points at sea, and from particular spots on the sea cliffs, from whence they could not be seen previously." The spectators of this fall of several acres saw it slide forward into the sea, "just as a ship is launched on tallowed planks." Quantities of

land have in this manner also been lost at Hythe.

We cannot take leave of Kent and its lost lands without reference to the submerged estate, many thousands of acres and "of goodlie pasture," of Earl Godwin, the father of Harold, who died in 1053. In the terrible flood of 1099, elsewhere referred to in this work, the waves swept over and destroyed this tract of territory, which is now known (alas, to many generations of mariners !) as the Goodwin Sands. They are about ten miles in length, and are in some parts three, and in others seven distant from the shore, and are commonly bare at low water. That they are really a remnant of land and not a mere accumulation of sea-sand was demonstrated by the Trinity Board engineers in the year 1817, when it was found by borings that the bank consisted of fifteen feet of sand, resting on blue clay ; and by subsequent borings, chalk was reached.

CHAPTER VIII

"The roaring tides
The passage broke, that land from land divides,
And where the lands retired, the rushing ocean rides."

Æneid III. 414.

GREATLY as the sea has receded within recent times from the modern town of Winchelsea, it

has not yet unrolled its liquid drapery so far as to disclose one of the chief cities and seaports of this realm "drowned by the floode."

There is probably no instance, within modern times at least, not even excepting Dunwich and Ravenspur, of so sudden and dramatic a destruction of an English town by the "rage and surgies of the sea." Not a remnant is left but the name; and this is borne by a town three miles distant, having no connection with Old Winchelsea, save that it was first built and peopled by the terrified survivors.

The site of the first town of Winchelsea was a low flat island, situate at the south-eastern extremity of Sussex, about six miles north-east of Fairlight Cliff. Jeake describes Old Winchelsea as washed by the British Ocean on the south and east, and by the mouth of the river Rother (then running out there) on the north.

Whether the town existed at the period of the Roman Conquest is a matter of doubt. Camden does not lay it down in his maps of Roman or even of Saxon Britain. In his map of Sussex he gives it under the Roman name of Vindelis, with the addition of "Old Winchelsey drowned," but that name would be more correctly given to the Isle of Portland. Yet Johnson in his Atlas declares it to have been a city in the time of the Romans, and in Gough's edition of Camden, and in several maps of ancient Britain, the harbour is given as Portus Novus.

As for the spot on which the old town stood, it is accurately marked in the map given by Dugdale in his "History of Embanking." The

bearings indicate a place immediately on the east side of the east pier head of Rye Harbour as it was fifty years since, adjoining the Camber Farm estate. Norden, in his preface to the "History of Cornwall," published in 1724, says of Winchelsea that "the ruins thereof lie under the waves three miles within the high sea." Tradition gives the same site, and report has spoken of ruins there found.

It is certain that, whether or not this existed in the time of the Romans, it was built and had achieved considerable importance in Saxon days. According to Ruding, King Eadgar had a mint here in 959; and it was a town of sufficient importance in the time of Edward the Confessor to be granted by him, together with the adjacent town of Rye, to the abbot and monks of Féchamp in France; to whom they were further granted and confirmed by King William and King Henry, with their liberties, free customs, pleas, plaints, and causes.* The abbot is described in Doomsday (1081–86) to have held within the manor of Rameslie five churches. These would include one in Rye, two in Old Winchelsea—St. Thomas and St. Giles, one in Brede, and the fifth, St. Leonard's, near Winchelsea.

To the west of the town lay Dimsdale forest.

* "It is not strange that no mention is made in Doomsday of the towns of Winchelsea and Rye; that document was not, as is often erroneously supposed, a record of all places and towns; it was an enumeration only of manors, and in it are mentioned the manors of Stainings and Rameslie, in Sussex, which was held by the Abbey of Féchamp."—COOPER.

a mighty wood which extended, at intervals, beyond Hastings. Norden tells us that "the whole forest of Dimsdale, which lay round about this Old Winchelsea, is also eaten up of the sea." The rivulet Dimsdale flows from the valley under Bromham, and enters the Brede channel half a mile below modern Winchelsea. In an Act of 3 Rich. II. there is mentioned "a certain way and marsh called Dymsdale, between the towns of Winchelsea and Hastings, which way and marsh were destroyed and overflowed by the sea."

To-day at low water, during spring tides, near Pett, the remains of a wood may be seen embedded in the sand, consisting of oak, beech, and fir, the former sound and nearly black. On the whole line of this coast, wherever ditches and dykes have been cut in the marshes, the roots and limbs of forest trees have been met with in vast numbers.

It is recorded in Doomsday Book that in this manor of Rameslie "a new burgh is established, where are 64 burgesses, paying £8." Now, *burgh* implies a town having certain rights and privileges; and it is clear that Old Winchelsea is here implied, for it was the only new borough within the possession of the Abbot of Féchamp, and the number of the burgesses attests its size.

In the time of William the Conqueror the port of Winchelsea was, and so continued for two centuries, a most convenient port for communication with France. Here, indeed, that celebrated personage landed on the 7th December, 1067, and by his sudden appearance defeated the plans of the English for shaking

off the Norman yoke; and here also, a hundred and twenty years later, King Henry II. landed from France. The old town was then of far greater relative importance than the new town, called by its name, afterwards grew to be. Old Winchelsea was, says Norden, a town of great trade and accompt, having in it when it flourished 700 householders, which meant in those days, considering the size of the houses, a population of not less than 5000 persons, and that the new town in its highest prosperity was of lesser glory than the former. In its neighbourhood was Bromhill, which was then populous. Camden says it was well frequented, whilst Kilburne observes that it was anciently a pretty town and much resorted to. Moreover, an extract from the Dering MS., transcribed by Sir William Burrell, informs us that tradition gave Bromhill fifty inns and taverns.

Old Winchelsea, together with its neighbour Rye, from which it was distant three miles, south-south-east, was added to the Cinque Ports by William the Conqueror; as in conferring the grant of Old Winchelsea to the Abbot of Féchamp, he speaks of its liberties, free customs, etc.; and in succeeding reigns they appear to have been placed on the same corporate footing as the other towns of that famous league were. In the time of King John, we find them styled "nobiliora membra Quinque Portuum."

The lost city was at the height of its glory during the troublous reign of John. It enjoyed all the privileges, and any student of English

history does not need to be told that they were many, of the most important Cinque Ports. Its bay was the place of rendezvous for the fleets of England; its commerce was great and flourishing; its thirty-nine squares and quarters were well calculated to give it importance and promote its wealth; and its geographical position directly opposite to Tréport, and not far from the direct line to Boulogne, gave it such standing that, after Philip of France, under the auspices of Pope Innocent III., had in 1213 commanded a great army to assemble at Rouen, whence they were to march to Boulogne, an armament of 1700 vessels was prepared to convey and guard them to England. King John, who had collected a considerable army at Dover, left that place and came to Winchelsea, where he remained some days. In 1216 the Barons of this realm, irritated by the royal tyranny, offered to acknowledge Louis, the son of Philip, as Sovereign of England. Philip, acceding to their request and the conditions they imposed, sent over a large army with Louis at their head. The French King vanquished nearly all the places opposed to him, although Dover made a gallant and successful resistance. The serious fears entertained by King John for the safety of Winchelsea, induced him to order the barons of the town to pay a ransom rather than allow their town to be burnt, should such a proceeding be attempted by Louis. Nevertheless, it is not recorded whether Winchelsea was attacked and resisted, or whether it followed the behest of its wavering monarch. It was not burnt, and

the French occupation was not of long duration. When they left, the mayor and burghers arose from dreams of prosperity to new scenes of activity for their native city.

But Old Winchelsea was already doomed to be utterly destroyed. Its fame and wealth, so far from augmenting, were already drawing to a close. During the first half of the thirteenth century mighty storms are recorded to have occurred; and in 1236 the first inundation at Winchelsea took place. It was only a warning, and did not seriously damage the town, which then, if we may believe the old chroniclers, who are fortified by the old writs and statutes, began to "wax exceeding proud and sinful against the Soveraigne lorde of this realme." The townsmen, who were under a foreign abbey, became troublesome to King and Parliament, because of their boldness and independence. In the 30th Henry III., the men of Winchelsea are fined ten casks of wine by the King for a contempt and trespass. The crews of Winchelsea were so far from scrupulous that they took to plundering the ships of other places as they passed along the coast. The reputation of the seafaring inhabitants for piracy began to be noised abroad. Many foreign cities, among which were Cologne, Bruges, Ypres, sent in complaints to the English Government against the depredations committed by the Winchelsea freebooters against their commerce on the high seas.* The result was that Henry III. resolved

* "Old Winchelsea had been a most powerful port; but, like the others, its vessels acted, in most of their cruises,

to bring the town directly under his own subjection, and in 1247, "for the better defence of this realm, and it might be to conceal from foreigners the intelligence of affairs at home and stop them of such convenient ports of passage," his Majesty gave the monks of Féchamp other lands in exchange for Winchelsea and Rye. As Hastings and St. Leonards were then of comparative unimportance, these were left in the abbot's hands.

The town had hardly passed over to the Crown three years when it was visited by a storm of such magnitude as to inflict a great, if not a fatal, injury to Old Winchelsea. Against foreign foes the valour of the men of Winchelsea was equal to their protection; but against the formidable onslaughts of Neptune they were without weapons, and powerless. By an old chronicler is the storm thus recorded—

"On the first day of October, the moon, upon her change appearing exceeding red and swelled, began to show tokens of the great tempest of wind

with savage barbarity. During the time that Simon de Montford, Earl of Leicester, held his iron rod over these countries, they gave full loose to their piracies, and flung overboard the crews of every ship they met, whether it was foreign or English; Leicester had share of the booty, and so winked at their enormities. In 1266, Prince Edward put a stop to their cruelties; he attacked Winchelsea, took it by storm, and put to the sword all the principal inhabitants concerned in the inhuman practices of the times; the rest he saved, and granted the inhabitants far better terms than they deserved. He at that time feared their powers and the assistance they might give to the rebellious Montford, had he been too rigorous in his measures."

that followed, which was so huge and mighty, both by land and sea, the like had not been lightly known and seldom, or rather never, heard of by men then alive. The sea forced, contrary to his natural course, flowed twice without ebbing, yielding such a roaring that the same was heard (not without great wonder) a far distance from the shore. Moreover, the same sea appeared in the dark of the night to burn, as it had been on fire, and the waves to strive and fight together, after a marvellous sort, so that the mariners could not devise how to save their ships where they lay at anchor, by no cunning or shift which could devise. At Winchelsea, besides other hurt that was done in bridges, mills, breaks and banks, there were 300 houses and some churches drowned with the high rising of the water course."

During this inundation Bromhill church was lost. But the inhabitants of Old Winchelsea instantly set to work to repair the damage, and buildings were soon being reared to replace the ones destroyed on the town's margin. Prayers for mercy were offered in the churches, and the priests, as well as many of the laity, did not fail to profit by the catastrophe to instil into the minds of the townsmen, and especially of the proud seafaring evil-doers, a better and more righteous frame of mind for the future.

When some dozen years after the inundation, the second in Winchelsea's history, Henry went to war with the Barons, notwithstanding the favour with which Winchelsea had been treated by the King, the townsmen were in vain exhorted to lend him any aid. Henry arrived here with his army on the 8th of May. During his three days' stay "he applied in vain for

assistance, urging them to send a naval force up the Thames to attack London." But the warden and barons of the ports "sternly forbade the use of their ships," and the King, probably not without cursing its obstinacy and disloyalty, quitted Winchelsea for Lewes, where the fateful battle was fought.

When Eleanor, Countess of the triumphant de Montfort, in 1265 made her journey to Dover, she came from Wilmington with her husband to Winchelsea. Here they spent Sunday, the 14th June, with all their suite, and here they feasted the burghers of the town, who were invited to join the Barons at Dover in the following month. This invitation the mayor and burgesses accepted, and more banquetting ensued.

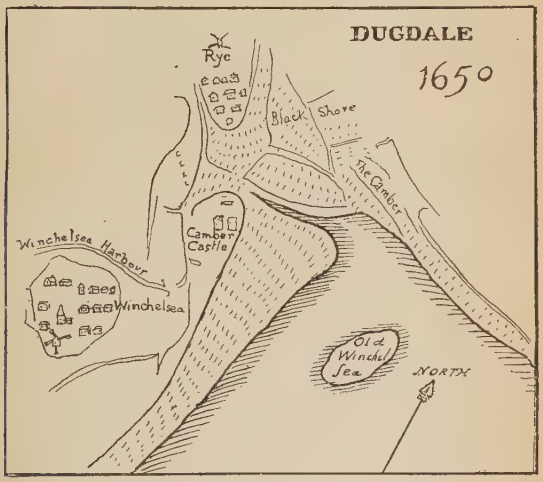
Charmed with this hospitality, and the favour which they were accorded under the new *régime* of the Barons, the men of Winchelsea now believed that they had full license for those lawless habits which made them, as marauders on the seas, the terror of foreign mariners and the dread even of their own countrymen. For two years they appear to have enjoyed a complete immunity, and carried out to the fullest extent the practices which have left a deep stain on their name. Winchelsea, therefore, was a friendly place for young Simon de Montfort to repair to on his father's death at Evesham. This he did, leaving his castle of Kenilworth on St. Clement's Day (1266) for London; whence, with deep secrecy, he departed and joined the citizens of Winchelsea, who were waiting to

receive him. Associating himself with the sea-rovers of the town, he rapidly made himself formidable by his bold piracies at sea. But Simon ultimately departed for France, and Prince Edward arrived on the scene to exact retribution. After punishing the offenders at Rye and elsewhere, he disembarked before Winchelsea, where the inhabitants were presumptuous enough to offer resistance. Edward, after repeated assaults, entered the town, and promptly executed many of the leading offenders. For a time it was thought the whole town would suffer, but the Prince ordered it to be spared on condition that in the future the citizens should abstain from their customary piracies.

In the reign of Edward I. Sir Matthew Hastings was bailiff of the town, when he received a letter from the King, by which they were directed to expel without delay all the Jews from the place. It appears that Jews had recently come hither from the Continent in great numbers, probably owing to the protection of Leicester and his pirates.

Year by year it became more evident that Old Winchelsea was approaching its doom. At length, in 1287, the catastrophe happened which totally annihilated the town, and obliged all the citizens who resided there to flee for their lives. No such memorial of this event (which is surely deserving of it) has been preserved to us in the treasure-house of English literature, as has been accorded to other places whose sudden destruction by sword, fire, tempest, earthquake, or lava flood is depicted deathlessly for us by

the poets. Yet this omission cannot be because the dramatic element is wanting; for the scene must have been awe-inspiring, lurid, full of pathos and intense human interest. A certain vivid passage in Lytton's "Last Days



THE SITE OF OLD WINCHELSEA.
(*Dugdale's Map.*)

of Pompeii" cannot but be applicable to the spectacle of that fourth day of February, 1287.

Here is the memorable entry made that day in the Records of Rye—and how easily we can conjure up the pale face and trembling fingers of the clerk who made it—

"M. D. quod anno domini MCCLXXXVIII, in vigilia Sanctae Agathae Virginis, submersa fuit villa de Winchelsea et omnes terrae inter Clivesden (*i.e.* Cliff End) usque ad le Vochere de Hythe."*

According to an ancient French chronicle, quoted by Somner—

"On the second of the nones of February, the sea in the isle of Thanet, rose and swelled so high, and in the marsh of Romenal, that it brake all the walls and drowned all the grounds: so that from the great wall of Appledore as far as Winchelsey, towards the south and west, all the land lay under the water lost."

And Camden, in recording the fatal date, adds—

"What time the face of the earth, both here and also in the coast of Kent neere bordering, became much changed."

Indeed, the sudden stoppage of the mouth of the Rother, at Romney, and the junction of its waters at Appledore with those of the estuary of Rye, must have completely metamorphosed the outlines of the two counties.†

Such is the story of the origin, rise, and destruction of an opulent, but, it is to be feared, not too virtuous English town, whose streets and churches, shops and dwellings, lie buried

* Harris, "History of Kent," says, "This inundation was very sudden, as indeed I have seen it expressed in an old record to have been, per substaneam intemperiem maris."

† In the old bed of the Rother an ancient vessel, apparently a Dutch merchantman, was found in the year 1824. It was built entirely of oak and much blackened.

beneath the waves, every vestige so obliterated that nothing remains to recall visibly its existence. Not even Carthage was plunged into such utter oblivion, in spite of the fact that the survivors fled to another place but three miles away, where they built, and upon which they bestowed the name of the lost town of Winchelsea.

It is well known that the present is not the original town of Hastings, which occupied a site which for centuries has been covered by the sea.

It is clear that the sea has, at various times, encroached disastrously in the vicinity of Hastings. A little to the west of the cliff, on which the remains of the castle are now seen, was formerly a great priory of the Black Canons, founded in the reign of Richard I. In consequence of the assaults of the sea upon the coast and the "church and house being overflowed and laid waste by its inundations, its inmates were compelled to abandon their dwelling and to seek a resting-place [at Warbleton] out of the reach of the ocean's fury." * In ancient days Hastings is said to have had a good harbour and a pier, which latter was destroyed in Queen Elizabeth's time by a storm. The remains of large blocks of timber and masses of stone, of which the pier was composed, were long visible far out at low water. At the priory we find, below the stone's foot, when a particular tide shifts the sand, plain indications of a former forest. Embedded in a blackish deposit, probably formed by the boughs and foliage

* Horsham.

decayed, is timber, some of which is of considerable size; also numerous hazel-nuts, the shells of which are in a perfect state of preservation.

Between Hastings and Pevensey Bay the shore line has been giving way to the sea. The erosion has amounted, for a series of years, to seven feet annually in some places, and prior to 1851 several martello towers had been removed by the Ordnance. At the famous promontory of Beachy Head a mass of chalk, 300 feet in length, and from 70 to 80 in breadth, fell, in the year 1813, with a tremendous crash. Similar slips have since been frequent.*

A mile to the west of Newhaven, the remains of an ancient encroachment are visible on the brow of Castle Hill. This earthwork, of British construction, was evidently once of considerable extent, and of an oval form, but the greater part has been cut away by the sea. The cliffs, which are here undermined, are lofty, and are fast disappearing.

That Beachy Head has for centuries been a victim to the waves is obvious. The whole space of Pevensey Levels, with the tortuous coast, to-day defended by martello towers, but when the Norman hosts were landed, unfortified, is here to be viewed. In former times there were seven high masses of rock, resembling

* "In a few centuries the last vestiges of the Woolwich beds or plastic clay formation on the southern borders of the chalk of the South Downs on this coast will probably be annihilated, and future geologists will learn from historical documents only, the ancient geographical boundaries of this group of strata in that direction." —LYELL, "Principles of Geology," vol. i. p. 534.

towers, standing separated from the cliff, and presenting the aspect of a turreted castle in ruins. These, once known as the "Seven Charleses," undermined by the tide, have crumbled away piecemeal. When two of their number had vanished they became known as the "Five Charleses;" another attack by the ocean reduced them to the epithet of the "Three Charleses." Then came a day when "The Charleses" betokened the remains of a once mighty race. It was long a weatherwise saying amongst the folk of the countryside, "When the Charleses wear a cap, the clouds weep."

Far out beyond the Charleses, when they once formed a portion of the habitable land, was once a British settlement and burial-ground. At Christmas, 1805, a considerable portion of cliff having fallen, carrying with it much of the grass-grown surface, a spectator observed something protruding from the cliff, nearly laid bare about ten feet below the surface. This proved to be a brass celt of good workmanship, and further search being made, other British implements and some gold ornaments were revealed. It was the custom to bury such implements and armaments with the corpse of a warrior, whose grave-diggers could little have dreamt that his tomb would ever come to be destroyed by the then distant sea.

CHAPTER IX

"Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll.
. . . . . .
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war,
These are thy toys . . .
Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee."
Byron.

PERHAPS no point off the coast of Sussex presents such interest to the student of Lost England as the waste of waters immediately fronting Selsey Bill.

Standing on the verge of that promontory, the visitor to-day, directing his face seaward, may, if he chooses, and his imagination aiding him, conjecture that in the ruffled expanse of breakers, exactly one mile distant from where he stands, was founded the first monastery in Sussex after the establishment of Christianity in England. St. Wilfrid was its founder, and subsequently became its first bishop. In Wilfrid and his successors, from the year 680 for a period of nearly 400 years, the see continued. Landward from the Saxon cathedral and the episcopal palace stretched a great wood, known as Selsey Park, containing many thousands of acres, and stocked with choice deer. Here, truly, is a choice and memorable fragment of Lost England. The tide now flows over not merely the cathedral and palace, but also what was and is to this day

denominated "The Park," being a place of anchorage for fishermen!

When the last vestige of the Park vanished cannot be ascertained, but that it was not gone in Bishop Sherburne's time appears from a lease granted in the 25th Henry VIII. by the aforesaid bishop to John Lews and Agatha, his wife, at the rent of £4, with a covenant to have sufficient herbage for seventy or eighty deer.*

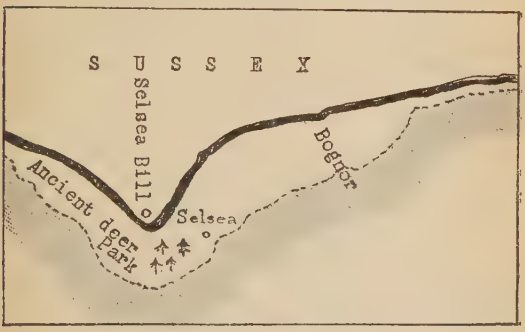


CHART OF LOST SUSSEX.

Of the value which its episcopal owners set upon Selsea Park and its deer we have testimony in a curious anecdote which has come down to us. Some poachers of the sixteenth century had broken thereinto in pursuit of a deer, which proceeding incensed the bishop so much (it was Bishop Rede, the same who built Amberley Castle) that he fulminated a decree from his

* Dallaway.

stronghold against the despoilers, condemning them body and soul by the greater excommunication, as it was called, and ordering the same to be recited in every church of the deanery. The poachers are called in this violent record "Dampnacionis filii" and "spiritu diabolico seducto," and are to be condemned by "bell, book, and candle"—that is to say, the bells are to ring, the cross raised, the candles lighted and then to be extinguished, the priest at the moment of its extinction declaring, "So shall the light of the offenders be extinguished for ever and ever! So be it! So be it! Amen!" How many other poor wretches were thus excommunicated for entering unbidden Selsea Park will never be known, but they probably do not sleep less easily in their graves on account of it; and the hardy mariner anchors now his ship in the middle of the park, ignorant of the penalties which would once attach to his presence there on foot and on dry land.

Camden says that in his time the ruins of a building were visible at low water.

> "In this isle remaineth onely the dead carkases as it were, of that ancient little citie, wherein those bishops sate, and the same hidden quite with water at everie tide, but at a low water evident and plaine to be seene."

To-day the parish of Selsea forms a peninsula, being surrounded on all sides by the sea, except on the north-west, where it is connected with the mainland by an isthmus, several furlongs across. The village was formerly situate in the middle of the peninsula, and the church, a stately fourteenth-

century pile, dedicated to St. Peter, as was the ancient cathedral, stands at the north-eastern extremity of the parish, two miles from the centre of the village. Although not so far from the sea it is secure for some time to come from Neptune's desecrating clutches.

At the ancient town and borough of Seaford, east of Newhaven harbour, on the opposite side of the estuary of the Ouse, a bed of shingle derived from the waste of the adjoining cliffs, had accumulated for several centuries. In the great storm of 1824 this bank was partially swept away.

Encroachments on the part of the sea had long been the natural order of things at Seaford. But still the inhabitants could not believe that old Ocean would entirely submerge them without warning. On the 23rd November, 1825, a great storm began to rage. The tide was flooding rapidly. Before long, says an eye-witness, the waves, which ran mountains high, began to rush over the bar, or bank of shingle, which is the main protection of the town; and at length ploughed an immense opening through the beach near Blatchington Battery, sweeping it away with fearful impetuosity. Another chasm in the beach, considerably larger than the mouth of New Haven harbour, was formed between the martello tower and the eastern cliff; through these openings the sea rushed, and speedily inundated all the low lands between the houses and the usual boundary of the waves, as well as the lands to the right and left of the town.

Every moment the foaming waters now gained on the town of Seaford. The scene of confusion and alarm well-nigh baffles description. The water flowed into the houses from five to six feet above the level of the street; the fishing-boats, forced from their moorings, came tossing upon the waves close to the buildings, and by the winds were driven along the streets or washed over walls into the adjoining fields. The waves rushed through the windows and doors of the houses most exposed to their fury, destroying the furniture and damaging the dwellings. The inmates made their escape from their houses with such furniture, clothes, or valuables as they could seize, and many escaped from their chamber windows into boats. Had the catastrophe occurred in the night, numerous lives must have been lost, for, as it was, there were many hair-breadth escapes. On this occasion the sea once more visited lands which had for many centuries been recovered from its empire. At Bishopstone, it flowed up the valley and advanced towards the hamlet of Norton, overthrowing walls of stone, and destroying all the carp and tench in a great pond at Blatchington, whose ancestors had dwelt there in safety for many generations.

And now we come to the lost town of Brighthelmstone, a very different place both as to locality and appearance with the Brighton of to-day. Were it now existent it would be described by geographers as being situate a mile south of the present fashionable watering-place,

a quaint, well-built English town, with several churches, and a fort from which to repel invaders.

Although of its earlier aspect we have no precise knowledge, yet there fortunately exists in the British Museum a curious old representation of the "attack made upon Brighthelmstone by the fleet of D'Annebalte," which gives an accurate portrayal of the principal features of the town in the year of grace 1545. This original drawing is rude, it is true, but it is valuable because it bears the stamp of truth, and was certainly executed by an artist who was present at the time and on the spot. All that he here depicts of the town is a part of lost England.

In the middle of the seventeenth century Brighthelmstone was a considerable place and in a flourishing condition, "being considered," says Hasted, "one of the principle towns in the county, containing near 600 families." From 1645 to 1655 it appears that grants of land to a considerable number had been made by the lords of the manor to various townsmen and husbandmen suffering from the inundations of the sea. In one instance a tenant had eight acres covered by the encroaching waves. In 1703, and again in 1705, occurred fearful storms and inroads. In "Magna Britannia" (1738) we read—

"The greatest damage to the buildings has been done by the breaking in of the sea, which, within these forty years, has laid waste above 130 tenements; which loss, by a modest computation,

VIEW OF BRIGHTHELMSTONE, 1545.

amounts to near 40,000; and if some speedy care be not taken to stop the encroachments of the ocean, it is probable that the town will in a few years be utterly depopulated, the inhabitants being already diminished one-third less than they were."

Long previous to that Warburton * had written :—

"I passed through a ruinous village called Hove, which the sea is daily eating up. It is in a fair way of being quite deserted; but the church being large, and a good distance from the shore, may perhaps escape.† A good mile further along the beach I arrived at Brighthempstead, a large, ill-built, irregular market-town, mostly inhabited by seafaring men. This town is likely to share the same fate with the last, the sea having washed away the half of it; whole streets being now deserted, and the beach almost covered with walls of houses being almost entire, the lime or cement being strong enough when thrown down to resist the violence of the waves."

Thus early in the eighteenth century the town under the cliff was demolished, much of it being buried under the accumulating mass of beach which the tempestuous sea rolled eastward. Certain it is that a few years before the middle of the century scarce a vestige of the ancient town could be traced.

Previous to the drowning of the old town by

* Landsdowne MS.

† The *Nonarum Inquisitiones* records the loss of 160 acres by the encroachment of the sea. A writer in *Magna Britannia* (1738) says, "This place was a considerable village long after the Norman times, but is now almost entirely swallowed up by the sea."

the encroachment of the sea there is every reason to believe that the space now occupied by Black Lion Street and Ship Street was called the Hempshires, and was laid out in plots or gardens for the production, among other things, of hemp for the use of the fishermen of the town. The necessity for new habitations for those who had been ejected from their old ones by the summary process of inundation caused the enclosed space to be built upon. Where the Old Ship Hotel now stands was formerly considered the extreme northern limit of the town.

In the reign of Henry II. the road which ran from Brighthelmstone to Rottingdean and Lewes was nearly a mile from the sea. Little by little the erosion went on, until the road came to be almost on the edge of the precipice.

"The encroachments of the sea on this part of the coast," says Horsham, "have become truly alarming to the owners of property on the cliffs: immense masses of chalk frequently detach themselves, and thus add to the domains of old Neptune."

A century ago the road became so dangerous that it was found necessary to form a new highway, leaving the sea "far to the south." How near it has again approached, no recent visitor to Brighton needs to be told.*

* "Some of your readers," wrote Mr. Henry Willett, in the *Brighton Guardian*, of June 28, 1876, "will be startled to know that the progressive encroachments of the sea opposite the new gas-works at Aldrington (about three miles west of Brighton) obtained by actual measurement, has been in the last ten years 270 feet, or at an

We now come to add to our long list of English towns engulfed by the sea the ancient borough of Shoreham, one of the principal sea-ports in the realm in the reign of Edward III., building and manning more ships than Dover, Bristol, Boston, or Hull. It came to be almost totally destroyed, and in 1432 possessed but thirty-six inhabitants. Camden, writing in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, says—

"Somewhere lower upon the shore appeareth Shoreham, in times past Scoreham, which by little fell to be but a village: . . . whereof the greater part, also being drowned and made even with the sea, is no more to be seene; and the commodiousnesse of the haven, by reason of bankes and barres of sand caste up at the river's mouth, quite gone; whereas, in foregoing times, it was wont to carrie ships with full saile as far as Brember, which is a good way from the sea."

King John landed at Shoreham with a large army from Normandy in 1199, immediately after the death of Richard Cœur de Lion, and also embarked thence some months later for France. The consequence of this town for a period of three centuries must be made evident by the circumstance of its furnishing as many

annual rate of nine yards. At another point on the Sussex coast, most valuable and vertile land, which would be worth at least £100 an acre, was swept away, in twenty-four hours, for a distance of 60 feet inland and for an extent of half a mile. The annual average rate of degradation of the cliff between Brighton and Newhaven is about three feet; so that any of your readers may ascertain the date on which to make a prophecy that the new chimney just erected by the Town Council near the Roedean Gate will topple into the sea."

vessels to the Royal Navy as Plymouth, and more than were demanded from Newcastle, Bristol, or London. Each of the twenty-six battleships which formed its contribution were manned with twenty-six fighting men. Of the old town only the magnificent church, far removed from the ocean's clutches, now remains.

During the period of no more than eighty years there are recorded at least twenty inroads of the sea on this coast, in which tracts of land from 20 to 400 acres in extent were overwhelmed at once, the value of the tithes being also mentioned in the records.*

Half the parish of Middleton, which adjoins Felpham, has been absorbed by the sea since the historical period. The church, of which only the walls are left, is now on the shore, and in a short time will be entirely destroyed. Bones protrude from the churchyard, and are carried

* In the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* (A.D. 1292) and *Nonarum Inquisitiones in Curia Scaccarii* (A.D. 1340) the following notices occur of the losses sustained by the action of the sea during eighty years only, 1260–1340 :—

"Thorney, 20 acres of arable land, and 20 acres of pasturage.
Selseye, much arable land.
Felpham, 60 acres.
Brighthelmston, 40 acres.
Aldington, 40 acres.
Portslade, 60 acres.
Lancing, much land.
Hove, 150 acres.
Heas, 400 acres."

After this proof of early begun and long-continued erosion, I suppose it is hardly necessary to quote from "Murray's Handbook," that "early in the seventeenth century the sea *began* its encroachments at Brighton."

away as the tide increases. It repeats the dismal tale, although in a lesser degree, of the fate of Selsey Cathedral.*

Of the parish of Ludlow, little more than 80 acres have escaped the devastations of the sea. Kingston parish chapel has been destroyed, and the remains of trees may be seen off the shore at Rustington, Preston, and Ferring. A resident of Preston, Mr. Heasman, ninety-five years of age, stated that when he was young, a man of four score told him that in his boyhood there was a park called Preston Park, which the sea now covers, and that large elms grew there, which were cut down and sold for one farthing a foot.

Whitaker observes that—

"the Isle of Wight, which, as late as the eighth century, was separated from the remainder of Hampshire by a channel no less than three miles in breadth, was now actually a part of the greater island disjoined from it only by the tide, and united to it always at the ebb. And during the recess of the waters the Britons constantly passed over the low isthmus of land, and carried their loaded carts of tin across it."

Here, again, is the opinion of Sir Henry Englefield—

"With respect to the communication supposed to

* "In the year 1755 I was sent to inquire about a wreck which happened on the coast below Tarring, and which was claimed by the lord of the manor. The tenant went with me to the high-water mark, and told me that when he was young (I do not remember his age) they used to play cricket on the ground on which we stood, and that the sea was then such a distance that no one ever struck the ball into it."—W. BRAY, March 3, 1827.

have existed at low water between the Isle of Wight and the main land, it seems impossible to have a doubt on the subject, after having inspected the coast."

In support of this opinion Worsley, the historian of the Isle of Wight, mentions that a hard gravelly beach extends a great way across the channel at the extremity where the tides meet.

Corresponding with this on the Hampshire

LOST LAND IN HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT.

side is a place called the Leap, possibly from the narrowness of the pass, and on the Isle of Wight opposite is a straight, open road at least two miles long, called Rue Street, which in another form traverses the island. Many parts of this road are of little or no use at this time, and unless it was heretofore used for the purpose of conveying tin, it is not easy to conjecture what purpose it was to answer. Sir Robert

Cotton (1609) is quoted to show that as late as Henry VIII.'s reign Southampton was an emporium and shipping-place for tin. There existed a century ago a large cellar near the quay at Southampton, still retaining the name of "the tin-cellar."

In the district known as the Undercliff a great deal of territory has been lost within the past century. A landslip which occurred in 1810 at East End destroyed 30 acres of ground; another in 1818, above 50 acres; and there have been several since of great severity. The *débris* of many may be seen, especially of those most recent, on the shore. The most extensive of the modern landslips took place at Niton, in February, 1799, when a small farm-house and about 100 acres of land were destroyed. As described by a contemporary —

"the whole of the ground from the cliff above was in motion, which motion was directed to the sea nearly in a straight line. . . . The ground above, beginning with a great founder from the base of the cliff, immediately under St. Catherine's, kept gliding down, and at last rushed on with great violence, and totally changed the surface of all the ground to the west of the brook that runs into the sea."

The cliffs between Hurst Point and Christchurch are undermined incessantly, the sea having often encroached at the rate of a yard annually for a series of years. "Within the memory of persons now living, it has been necessary thrice to remove the coast road further

inland. The church of Hordwell, once in the middle of that parish, now totters on the edge of the cliff."

It had long braved the storms and waves which assailed it, for it was built of stern materials in a hardy age. But at length "the sea fowls came to rest within its hoary aisles and the swallow found her nest beside the altar of the living God."

The promontory of Christchurch Head yields slowly to encroachment, but the waves have cut deeply into Poole Bay. After severe frosts, great landslips take place, which by degrees become enlarged into narrow ravines or chines, as at Boscomb. The peninsulas of Purbeck and Portland are continually wasting away. In 1665 the cliffs adjoining the quarries to the extent of one hundred yards were precipitated into the sea. In December, 1734, we read of a slip of fifty yards happening on the east side of the isle.

But the most memorable sudden loss of land of which we have record in recent times occurred in 1792.

"Early in the morning the road was observed to crack; this continued increasing. Before two o'clock the ground had sunk several feet, and was in one continued motion, but attended with no other noise than what was occasioned by the separation of the roots and brambles, and now and then a falling rock. At night it seemed to stop a little, but soon moved again. Before morning, the ground from the top of the cliff to the waterside had sunk, in some places, fifty feet perpendicular."

The extent, we are told, of the ground that

moved was about *a mile and a quarter* from north to south, and 600 yards from east to west!

In 1842 a storm burst over the Chesil Bank with great fury, and the village of Chesilton, built upon its southern extremity, was overwhelmed, with many of its inhabitants.

At Lyme Regis, in Dorsetshire, the "Church Cliffs," as they are called, one hundred feet in height, gradually fell away, between 1800 to 1829, at the rate of one yard a year. A singular landslip occurred in 1839, on the coast of Devonshire, between Lyme Regis and Axmouth, carrying away a tract three-quarters of a mile long and 240 feet broad. The shores of Tor Bay recede continually from the sea's onslaught. Thrice at least within a century has it been found necessary to reconstruct the road between Torquay and Paignton farther inland. A solid mass of masonry, built for the protection of one road, was swept away by the waves in October, 1859, at which time the neighbouring cliffs were also undermined at many points on the coast.

Although not strictly belonging to my subject, as laid down on the title-page, I cannot close this brief inventory of lost land without mention of Scotland's recent losses. Being more thinly settled with few villages on the sea-coast, the inroads of the sea, although great, have disturbed fewer landmarks. In Inverness-shire, Fort George and the surrounding district has suffered. The old town of Findhorn, in Morayshire, now lies beneath the waves. According to Lyell, on the south coast of Kincardineshire, an illustration

was afforded, at the close of the last century, of the effect of promontories in protecting a line of low-shore.

The village of Mathers, two miles south of Johnshaven, was built on an ancient shingle beach, protected by a projecting ledge of lime-stone rock. This was quarried for lime to such an extent that the sea broke through, and in 1795 carried away the whole village in a single night and penetrated 150 yards inland, where it has maintained its ground ever since, the new village having been built farther inland on the new shore.

Within the past century, at Arbroath, in Forfarshire, which is built on a rock of red sandstone, gardens and houses have been carried away since the commencement of the present century by encroachments of the sea. In the same county, at Button Ness, it had become necessary, before 1828, to remove the lighthouses at the mouth of the estuary of the Tay, the waves having advanced inland for three-quarters of a mile.

At St. Andrews, in Fifeshire, a tract of land which formerly intervened between the castle of Cardinal Beaton and the sea has been entirely annihilated, together with the remains of the Priory of Crail. On either side of the Firth of Forth land has been lost, especially at North Berwick and at Newhaven, where an arsenal and dock, built in the fifteenth century, has been submerged.

Were we to proceed farther in our categorical quest of lost land, the results would be seen to

be even more stupendous, and would require more than one of the folios of Oldmixon properly to describe.

After this cursory and necessarily imperfect survey of the British coasts the reader will see, by an examination of the maps, where this kingdom has suffered most in its eternal struggle with the relentless waves which encircle it. The diagrams will serve to convey an idea of what we have lost in the past; but what we are now losing, and will continue to lose in the future, if the present rate of coast erosion is maintained, is less calculable. Figures are, in such matters, far less reliable than the data which are to be gained through the reading of history and topographical memoirs; but even figures, although unsatisfactory, must be allowed to give a powerful indication of England's geographical shrinkage. The official reports issued by the Board of Agriculture of the total area of this island, not including foreshore and tidal water, from the year 1867, give the area as follows:—

TOTAL AREA OF GREAT BRITAIN.

(According to Official Survey.)

1867	56,964,260	1890	56,786,199
1880	56,815,354	1900	56,782,053

In England alone the total acreage in 1867 was 32,590,397. In 1900 it had sunk to 32,549,019, a loss of over 40,000 acres. But, as I have pointed out, it would be unwise to base an estimate of the loss by coast erosion on these

figures, because it naturally includes reclaimed marsh and fen lands and other drained districts. In a single year several thousand acres have been thus reclaimed. The loss by coast erosion in England is probably not less than 2000 acres a year, the average throughout history being, of course, much greater than that.

If the shrinkage of the coasts goes on in the next thousand years as it has done since King Alfred's day, many hundreds of our coast towns and villages, from Hartlepool and Scarborough to Hastings on the one hand and from Blackpool and Holyhead to St. Ives on the other, will have been swept into the sea, and as much territory lost to us as few Englishmen, though the mildest of Chauvinists, even at the expense of a billion of money and the life-blood of a million soldiers, would willingly see conquered by a human foe.

It is undeniable, and the results of the foregoing investigations attest it forcibly, that, however much we may strive to be Expansionists in our Empire, our commerce, and literature, we are little Englanders all, living in a little England which is annually shrinking into smaller geographical dimensions.

CHAPTER X

"While the Leucadian coast, mainland before
By rushing seas is sever'd from the shore,
So Zancle to the Italian earth was tied ;
And men once walk'd where ships at anchor ride."
OVID'S *Metamorphoses.*

IN order that the student of "Lost England" may not suppose the destructive forces of the sea to be wholly or chiefly confined to this island, and also to present him with even more vivid testimony to its conquest over the land, it has been thought fit to add the present supplementary chapter.

That the Channel Islands, particularly Jersey, have suffered a comparatively large loss of area there is sufficient proof.

In the Harleian Collection, at the British Museum, is a MS. relating to Jersey, which says :—

"It is acknowledged, and the records of those times testify it, that in the parish of St. Ouen, the sea hath overwhelmed within these 350 years the richest soil of that parish ; that is, a vale from beyond the pools towards Sestac in length, and in breadth from the hill very farre into the sea, and that to this day stumps of oakes are found in the sand during the ebbe, and some ruins of buildings among the rocks ; the like whereof is also seen in the bay of St. Brelade. But of late years, within the memory of most men, two great rocks lying one behind the other in the sea, at a place called Le

EARLY ENGLISH CHART, SHOWING THE COMPARATIVE AREA OF THE CHANNEL ISLANDS AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT, THE LAST-NAMED ALMOST TOUCHING

Hoc, in St. Clement's parish, the nearest of which is severed from the land a bowshot at full sea, were joined to it, and served many men yet alive to drye vraic upon : which in former times was the gate of a great tract of land neere Moat Orgueil Castle, called Le Banc du Viellet; which appeareth above water at halfe ebbe, like an island, at some distance from the main land."

The shores of France, particularly in Brittany, where the tides rise to a remarkable height, are the constant prey of the sea. It is recorded that in the ninth century many villages and forests were carried away, the configuration of the coast suffering great change, and the hill of St. Michel was detached from the mainland. The populous parish of Bourgneuf and several other villages in that district were inundated in 1500. In 1735, during a great tempest, the submerged ruins of Palnel were clearly visible.

But by far the greatest victim, amongst European countries, to the fury of the waves, is Holland. A geographical map of that country, as it existed eight centuries ago, is not recognizable. Tradition tells of a great inundation in Friesland in the sixth century. From that time every gulf, every island, indeed, every city in Holland, has its catastrophe to chronicle. In thirteen centuries it is recorded that one great inundation, besides minor ones, has occurred every seven years; and the country being all plain, these inundations were veritable floods. Towards the close of the thirteenth century the sea destroyed a part of a fertile peninsula near the mouth of the Ems, and swallowed up more than

thirty villages. In the course of the same century, a series of inundations opened an immense chasm in Northern Holland, and created the Zuyder Zee, causing the death of more than eighty thousand persons.

In 1421 a tempest swelled the Meuse, so that in one night the waters overwhelmed seventy-two villages and 100,000 inhabitants. In 1532 the sea burst the dykes of Zeeland, destroying hundreds of villages and covering for ever a large tract of country. In 1570 a storm caused another inundation in Zeeland. In the province of Utrecht, Amsterdam was invaded by the waters, and in Friesland 20,000 people were drowned. Other great inundations occurred in the 17th century; two terrible ones at the beginning of the 18th; one in 1825 that desolated North Holland, Friesland, Over-yssel, and Guelders; and another in 1855, which invaded the latter place and the province of Utrecht, and covered a great part of North Brabant.

Besides these great catastrophes, there happened in Holland, in different centuries, innumerable smaller ones, which would have been famous in any other country, and which in Holland are hardly remembered, as, for instance, the rising of the Lake of Haarlem, itself the result of the inundation of the sea. Flourishing cities of the gulf of Zuyder Zee vanished under the waters; villages of the coast, from Helder to the mouths of the Meuse, from time to time inundated and destroyed, and in all these inundations immense loss of life of men and animals. The church of

Scheveningen, near the Hague, was once in the middle of the village. It now stands on the shore, half the place having been overwhelmed by the waves in 1570. A series of islands extending from the Texel to the mouths of the Elbe and Weser are to-day the last relics of a stretch once continuous. They have greatly diminished in size, and have lost about a third of their number since the time of Pliny. For that naturalist counted twenty-three islands between the Texel and the Eider in Schleswig-Holstein, whereas there are now only sixteen, including Heligoland and Newwerk.

The island of Heligoland, which was lately a British possession, and now ceded to Germany, has been greatly reduced in size since the year 800. I have seen a map in Von Hoff which shows the present island to be only a fraction of its former area. Sandy Island, now separated from Heligoland by a navigable channel, formed, less than a century ago, a portion of the larger island.

In the Roman period there existed an alluvial plain of great fertility where the Ems entered the sea by three arms. A flood in 1277 first destroyed a part of the peninsula. Other inundations followed at different periods throughout the 15th century. In 1507, a part only of Torum, a considerable town, remained standing; and in spite of the erection of dams, the residue of that place, together with market towns, villages, and monasteries to the number of fifty, were finally destroyed.

There are, declares Lyell, so many records

of waste on the western coast of Schleswig as to lead us to anticipate that at no distant period in the physical geography of Europe, Jutland may become an island, and the ocean may obtain a more direct entrance into the Baltic. The marsh islands between the rivers Elbe and Eider are now mere banks. Some of them, after having been inhabited with security for more than ten centuries, have been suddenly overwhelmed. In this manner, in 1216, no fewer than 10,000 of the inhabitants of Eiderstede and Ditmarsch perished; and on the 11th of October, 1634, the islands and the whole coast, as far as Jutland, suffered by a dreadful deluge.

The tale of the loss of Nordstrand has been often told. Up to A.D. 1240 this island was so nearly connected with the mainland as to appear a peninsula, and was commonly called North Friesland. It measured from nine to eleven geographical miles from north to south, and six to eight from east to west. In the aforementioned year, it was torn asunder from the continent, but continued to be both prosperous and populous. After numerous losses, it still contained 9000 inhabitants. Finally, on October 11, in the year 1634, a flood passed over the whole island, in which 1300 houses, with numerous churches, were destroyed. More than 6000 persons perished, and 50,000 head of cattle. Of the great island of Nordstrand, three small islets remain, one of which bears the name of Nordstrand. All are incessantly wasting owing to the action of the sea.

History recounts during the past ten centuries

the persistent erosion of the cliffs of Denmark. The deepening of gulfs, the severing of peninsulas from the mainland, and the waste of islands is a continual process; while in several cases marsh lands, defended for centuries by dykes, has at last been overwhelmed, and thousands of the inhabitants drowned. In this way, the island of Barsoe, on the coast of Schleswig, has lost, year after year, an acre at a time, and Alsen suffers in the same manner.

But all these modern calamities in Jutland pale before the terrible catastrophe which overtook the peninsula in the third century B.C. This is known to history as the Cimbrian Deluge, and a description is recorded in the pages of Strabo. There was a tradition, in Virgil's time, that Sicily was part of Italy, which the poet alludes to in a passage in the *Æneid*, iii., 414, which Dryden has thus rendered:—

"... Th' Italian shore
And fair Sicilian coast were one, before
An earthquake caused the flaw: the roaring tides
The passage broke, that land from land divides,
And where the lands retired, the rushing ocean
rides."

In fact, there are not many coasts in Europe whose borders are at all densely peopled, where we may not find records of the similar loss of land. The records in America, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, and the other countries of the Western hemisphere are as yet naturally meagre, but it is known that at several places the marine erosion has been severe. At Cape May, in Delaware, the encroachment of the sea was shown by

observations made for sixteen consecutive years, to average about nine feet annually. At Sullivan's Island, at the entrance to the Charleston harbour, in South Carolina, the sea is said to have carried away a quarter of a mile of land in three years. Florida is believed to be a signal sufferer in this respect, although I can find no figures or other information available.

The best geological authorities in England deny that the gain of land, especially on our Eastern coasts, since the earliest historical period, counterbalances the loss. Those who affirm the opposite have been at no pains to reckon the amount of erosion; and seem to lose sight of this: that while the new acquisitions are apparent, there are rarely any natural monuments to attest the former existence of the land which has been submerged. So much for the comfortable, but wholly erroneous, theory of a full compensation by lands already reclaimed by embankment from the sea.

But the vast territory which has been shown to have been destroyed elsewhere in Europe is evidence that the lost land of England, taking the very highest estimate of area, is by no means on so large a scale as to test the credulity or challenge the doubt of the inquirer.

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